McCLURE'S MAGAZINE
VOL. XXXIX AUGUST, 1912 No. 4

CAMPAIGNING FOR BABIES' LIVES

BY CONSTANCE D. LEUPP

"For nations are gathered out of nurseries."—CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THIRTY years ago a cry of terror rang through France. It originated with the statisticians and the savants, resounded among the statesmen and the sociologists, was caught up by the politicians and the common citizens: the French race was dying out.

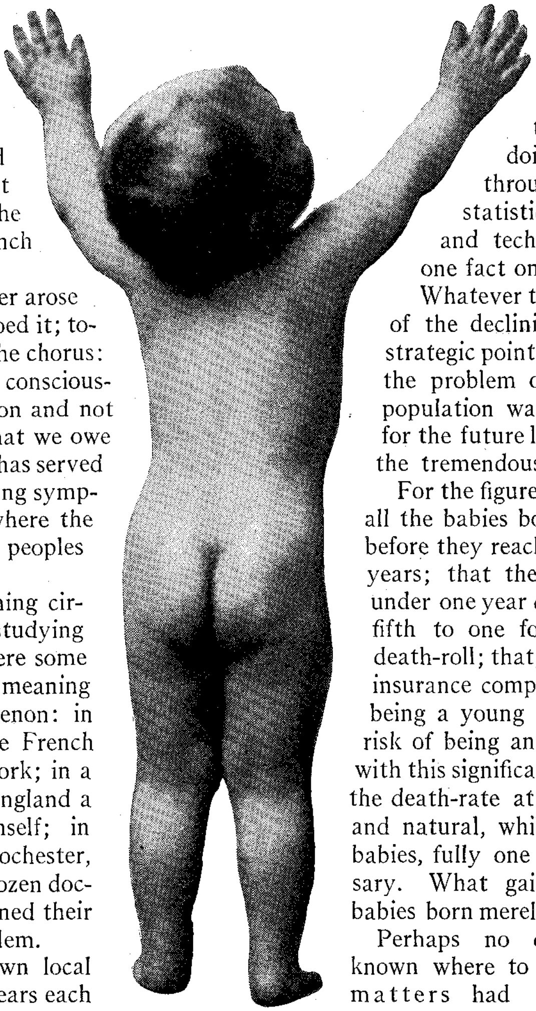
From England a little later arose a similar cry; Germany echoed it; to-morrow America will join the chorus: for we are awaking to the consciousness that it is to immigration and not to the native birth-rate that we owe our increase. Immigration has served so far to disguise the startling symptom among us; for everywhere the birth-rate of the Caucasian peoples is on the decline.

Following the first widening circles of alarm came a saner studying of the facts. Here and there some one began to figure out the meaning of this terrifying phenomenon: in Paris a doctor began; in the French provinces a mayor set to work; in a manufacturing center in England a doctor-mayor applied himself; in New York City, Yonkers, Rochester, Cleveland, and Chicago a dozen doctors and social workers trained their energies full upon the problem.

Each was busy in his own local field, and for a number of years each community struggled separately over the stubborn facts and figures. Then, one by one, each looked up and took stock of what the others were doing. And behold! through the welter of statistical contradictions and technicalities emerged one fact on which all agreed: Whatever the cause and result of the declining birth-rate, the strategic point at which to attack the problem of the decrease in population was not there; hope for the future lay in cutting down the tremendous baby death-rate.

For the figures indicated that of all the babies born one third died before they reached the age of five years; that the deaths of babies under one year composed from one fifth to one fourth of the total death-roll; that, in the terms of an insurance company, the "risk" of being a young baby equaled the risk of being an octogenarian, but with this significant difference—that the death-rate at eighty is normal and natural, while, of the deaths of babies, fully one half are unnecessary. What gain, then, in more babies born merely to die?

Perhaps no one would have known where to begin to remedy matters had not two historic events given the clue. Twice, and only twice in recent times,


Courtesy of the N. Y. Division of Child Hygiene

Copyright, 1912, by The McClure Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

BOARD OF HEALTH
DOCTOR
FREE Clinic for
SICK BABIES

Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

AT ONE OF THE FREE CLINICS FOR SICK BABIES ORGANIZED BY THE NEW YORK BOARD OF HEALTH. THE MOTHERS ARE GIVEN PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE CARE OF THEIR BABIES

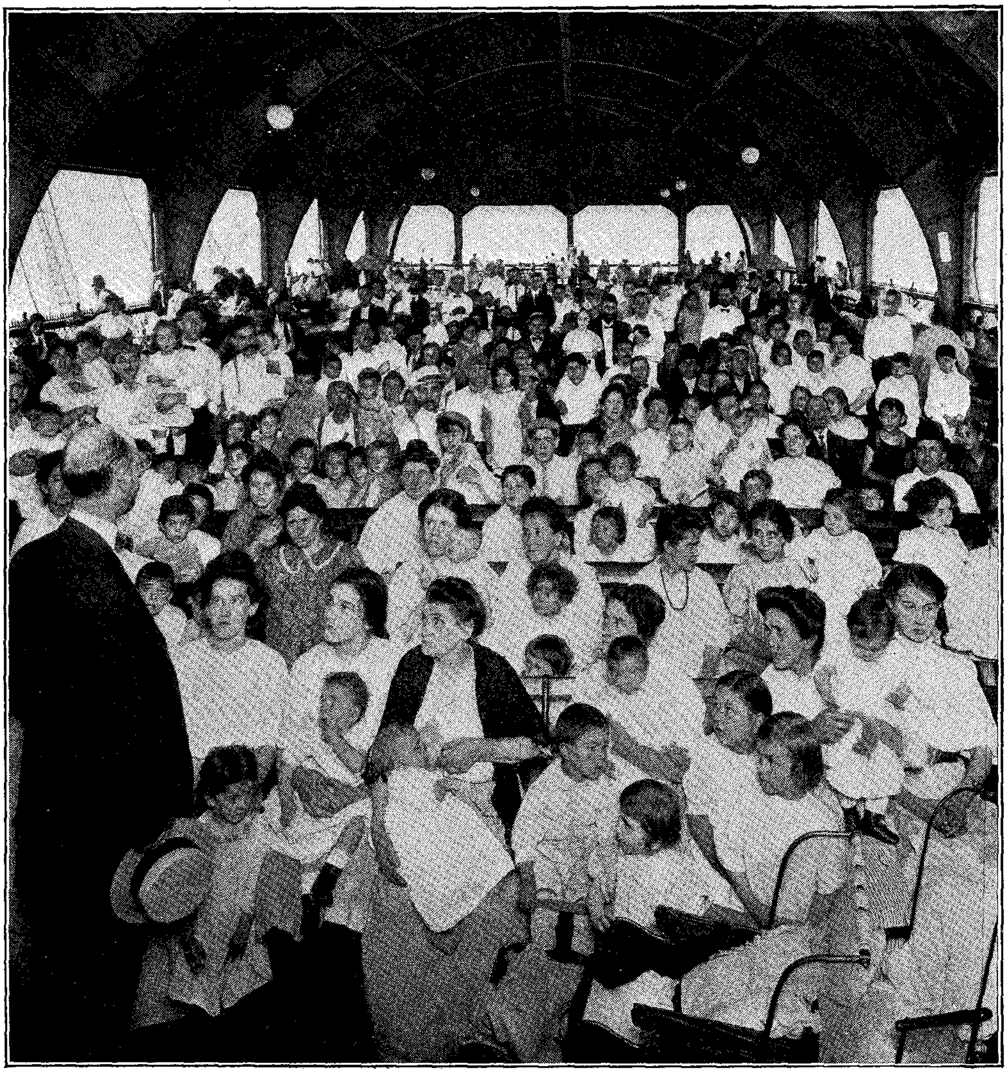
had the infant mortality rate shown a marked decrease.

First, when the Civil War in this country caused a cotton famine in England, and the mills of Lancashire shut down, throwing thousands of operatives out of work, as the total death-rate among the shivering and starved population shot up, the baby death-rate dropped steadily to a figure unprecedentedly low even for prosperous times.

A few years later, when, during the Franco-Prussian War, the German army was bivouacked about Paris and privation and disease pushed up the death-rate of the French capital, the same strange phenomenon was observed: the babies throve on the hardships which killed off the adults; simultaneously, in those suburbs of the city from which in piping times of peace the rich little Parisians drafted their wet-nurses, the baby death-rate dropped from thirty-five per cent to seventeen per cent, and remained at that figure during the time that communication with the city was cut off.

The answer to the riddle in each case was the same: in prosperous times the young mothers went out to work; in hard times, when there was no work, they stayed home and nursed their babies.

Thus the first commandment for the baby rescuers was established: better a thousand times the natural food and care of a mother, even an ill-nourished, poverty-stricken mother,



Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

DR. McADAM, ONE OF THE OFFICERS OF THE NEW YORK BOARD OF HEALTH, ADDRESSING A MOTHERS' MEETING AT ONE OF THE RECREATION PIERS

tnan a plentiful supply of artificial food combined with neglect. How to teach this fact to ignorant mothers, then, was the first problem. Paris took the lesson of the siege to heart, and to-day, to offset her small birth-rate, she has the smallest baby death-rate of any large city in Europe — a fact that is due to the work of one man and his disciples.

Dr. Budin's Legacy

As Dr. Pierre Budin sat in his office at the maternity hospital one day, there came to him a woman of the people in whom he recognized a patient of the previous year. It had been his pleasure then to place in the arms of the young mother a particularly fat and promising little son, and her delight in her first-born had been pathetic. Now he was soon to have a rival in his mother's affections.

"How is *le petit* Jacques?" inquired the kindly, spectacled doctor.

"He is dead," said the young woman dully.

The doctor's brow contracted. One more baby brought into the world only to die: to cause the mother, first suffering, then a little short-lived joy, finally a grief that never dies. And besides the mother, there was the State to consider.

For to Dr. Budin it was an old, old story. Every day these women came to him for their confinements, and when he recognized them as

Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

former patients, he always asked about last year's baby. During the years he had come to dread the response, for too often came this answer, "*Il est mort.*" Had it been diphtheria, then, or pneumonia? Ah, no; the little life had flickered out during the dog-days of summer. The heat, combined with the ignorance of the mothers, had done it.

Suddenly the doctor had an inspiration. He made some simple preparations, and then to each mother who went out of the hospital with her month-old baby in her arms he said:

"Come back next Wednesday, and bring the baby for me to see."

Thus, twenty years ago, Dr. Pierre Budin established his *consultations de nourrissons*, which were destined to serve as models for baby-saving work the world over.

"The only equipment that is necessary," said he, "is a pair of scales and the services of a devoted doctor."

Each week the babies were weighed and examined, and the mothers were advised as to feeding and care. Not to cure sick babies, but to keep well babies well, became the motto of the consultations.

Some years later, his biographer tells us, Budin was "struck down on the field of honor and of duty." As he was going to a conference on infant mortality at Marseilles, he contracted pneumonia, and died, leaving to his assistants and pupils this letter:

> *My dear Friends:*
>
> To you I intrust the fate of the little babies of France. I count on you to spread by your own efforts now, and later through your pupils, the necessary propaganda in favor of the consultations with young mothers. BUDIN.

When his confrères gathered to discuss the subject of a fitting memorial to the devoted man, there arose a woman who had been his patient and his pupil, with a suggestion which received the unanimous indorsement of the meeting: for she pleaded, not for a useless statue, but for a modest building in which to carry on his work.

So it was decided. Subscriptions came in fast, and the result was the Foundation Budin, which in Paris has reduced the list of little victims of the dread summer disorders from 35,000 to 17,000.

At number 91 in the Rue Falguière stands the gleaming little building, all white paint and glass, in and out of which all day long pour streams of doctors, students, midwives, mothers, and even young girls, going to lectures and consulting the library. Here come the women of the people, with their young babies, into the "laughing garden of the mothers," and to the consultations. All are welcome; sick babies only are excluded, for fear of contagion.

Once a week the mothers come with their babies into the main reception-room; four by four, they pass into the smaller weighing-room,

Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

where each receives a basket into which to drop her child's clothing. Each baby is then weighed, inspected, and redressed, and the mother carries it into the next room, where the doctor looks at the card record, listens to the mother's account of the week's history, gives advice, and prescribes any change in feeding that he may deem wise. If artificial food is necessary, the best pasteurized and modified milk is supplied.

In this way, each mother is taught how to care for her own child and how to keep it well; and each becomes a teacher in her neighborhood. Artificial food is never advised or provided unless absolutely necessary; for this was the doctrine of the master.

"If one simply says to the women of the people, 'Come, get milk; we will give it to you of good quality, pasteurized and free,' they will wean their babies, for they will have no more interest in nursing them."

All over France now, wherever the consultations have been established, the baby's arch-enemy has been held at bay; for in those communities the summer list of baby deaths has been cut fairly in two.

So much for people who live in crowded cities; hear now what a miracle was accomplished in a country town.

A Town Where Babies Do Not Die

A generation ago the little commune of Villiers-le-Duc elected as mayor a Monsieur Morel, who became so interested in the welfare of the future citizens that he took up the study of medicine in order to equip himself to be as useful to them as possible. Like Budin, he was an experimentalist by nature, and after some false starts he finally worked out a series of orders beginning thus:

> Every woman with child, whether married or not, having her home in the village, and not in possession of sufficient means to allow her to take upon herself the expense of the measures necessary to secure her own life and that of the child about to be born, shall have the right to require the help of the village authorities.

Then followed a carefully worked out series of directions about the care of the child, and a clause making it compulsory to notify the authorities in the event of any illness of the baby, whether contagious or not. There were directions about how to apply for free medical aid and nursing, rules for the loan of the village sterilizing apparatus and bottles, fortnightly use of the communal baby-weighing machines; and as a triumph of astuteness came the final statement:

> Every nurse bringing up her own child or a child intrusted to her, whether at the breast or by the bottle, who shall produce the child in a good state of health at the age of one year, shall have a grant of two and one half francs a month, dating from the time when she first began to nurse the child.

The result of this extraordinary assumption of responsibility by the authorities is unprecedented in the history of baby-saving work today. For, in the ten years during which the regulations were in force, not a single baby died in the town of Villiers-le-Duc and not a woman died in childbirth.

The great success of this unique experiment lay not only in encouraging the mother to nurse her child, but even more in making this possible by giving her instruction and care for two months before the baby's birth.

"For," said M. Morel quaintly, "the mother's milk is the private property of the babe, and whoever deprives the babe of this, the sole right it possesses, is not only a thief but a scoundrel."

Some years later another mayor who was also a doctor, fired by the record of Villiers-le-Duc, sought to perform the same kind of service for his town. This time it was an Englishman to whom the paternal French methods were out of the question; the town which he proposed to use as a laboratory for his experiment was a manufacturing center, and presented an infinitely more complex problem than the agricultural commune whose record he strove to emulate.

The "Mayor of Babies"

Benjamin Broadbent of Huddersfield, known in England as the "Mayor of Babies," began his task, when he came into office, by selecting Longwood, a section of the town where the larger part of the population was poor but fairly well housed. To the citizens of Longwood he made his famous proclamation that to every baby born within its borders during his mayoralty he would present, as a prize for safely traversing the first perilous twelve months of life, a birthday gift of one pound sterling.

The prize went to every child who qualified, including the children of the vicar and the wealthy manufacturer.

Every baby that received a promissory note card that year, unless born into a well-to-do, intelligent family, promptly received a visit from one of the "lady assistant medical officers of health." Longwood was divided into sections, with a "lady superintendent" in charge of each, and under her a number of "lady helpers." Each of these helpers had from fifteen to twenty babies on her list, whose mothers she visited and

Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

ONE OF THE VISITING NURSES OF THE NEW YORK BOARD OF HEALTH, SHOWING A CLASS OF MOTHERS AND YOUNG GIRLS THE RIGHT WAY TO BATHE A BABY

advised at regular intervals, summoning the medical officer when necessary.

Prior to the mayor's experiment, the infant mortality rate of Longwood had averaged for a number of years 139 deaths to 1,000 births. During the experimental year 112 babies were born; 4 of them died, 1 removed from the town and could not be traced, and the other 107 received the prize. Thus in one year the mayor's scheme reduced the death-rate to 44 to 1,000, assuming that the lost baby died, or 36, assuming that it lived — a tremendous reduction in either case.

What the spectacular birthday offer actually contributed to this gratifying result was simply this: *it enabled the authorities to know, and know at once, just when and where each baby was born.* The English law granted an interval of six weeks for the registration of births, and the mayor had been struck by the frequency with which the birth and death were registered together; the authorities did not know of the baby's arrival until too late.

"The first week is the most fatal week," said Broadbent, "and the first month, and the first three months. We felt that we must get in first, and not let death seize the baby before we had even tried to help. Then I thought we could find out whether they were born simply to die, or whether they were born to live, and died through ignorance and lack of care."

Armed with his success in Longwood as an argument, and aware that the birthday offer which he had made from his own private pocket-book would shortly exhaust the resources of a millionaire, Broadbent went to Parliament the following year with a private bill which should make it a punishable offense for the attendant physician or midwife not to notify the authorities of the birth of every child within three days. By this time the Huddersfield experiment had attracted so much attention in England that the bill passed, notwithstanding a hesitancy to give authority to so novel an idea. The law is now optional for every town in the kingdom.

Normal Death-Rate Trebled in American Towns

The ex-mayor has demonstrated to his own satisfaction that an infant mortality rate of 70 to 1,000 births should be normal for an industrial town. This is particularly interesting to Americans, in view of the prevailing rates in our great New England textile towns. In 1909 Fall River had a record of 190 baby deaths to 1,000 births*; Lawrence nearly matched it with a record of 172.

In the United States, meanwhile, a city here and there was making desultory, hysterical attempts in summer to save the babies that were already ill. A few towns, notably Rochester, went to work with a determined sanity. New York City, with the most difficult problem of all on her hands, epitomizes the mistakes and the triumphs of the campaign on this side of the Atlantic.

---

*The figures used throughout this article indicate the deaths of babies under one year of age; while the death-rate under two is also very high, the infant mortality rate (figured in relation to the birth-rate, not, as is the total death-rate, in proportion to the population) is commonly accepted as the record of deaths under one year of age. The "infant mortality rate" means the number of deaths under one year to 1,000 births.

In 1880 the infant mortality rate of New York was 288.9; in 1911, in spite of the constant growth and increasing congestion of the city, it had been reduced to 120. No one person with a definite program brought about the great change. A hundred forces working unconsciously together, hundreds of persons and dozens of organizations working separately, making mistakes, acknowledging their errors, and gallantly taking a fresh start — these are the elements that constitute the record of New York's battle for the babies.

The city was flooded with a heterogeneous foreign population, each colony formed of families direct from the rural districts of the old country, with scant knowledge of the restraints of city life. In the Italian colony, the babies, swaddled according to the national custom, feasted on the raw fruit and vegetables from the push-cart. Patent foods were accepted at their face value, and while the mother was busy the baby sucked a "pacifier," and reaped therefrom a crop of adenoids and enlarged tonsils. If it was more convenient, the child was weaned without compunction, and fed on the dirty milk from the corner grocer's. Many a tenement home has no ice-chest, and the milk, after standing around exposed to the dirt and flies for hours, was administered in a bottle far from clean. When the baby cried, he was fed; for a limited imagination can conceive of only one reason for a child's discontent, with the result that among ignorant parents a baby is overfed ten times to once that he is starved. If he got any water, it was unboiled and unfiltered. Superstition and unsanitary habits were fostered by the midwife, a European institution which has flourished and degenerated to an alarming degree on American soil.

While ignorance and dirt prevailed the year round, it was in July and August that the results

Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

AT MRS. PALISI'S, AN ITALIAN FAMILY WHERE THE BABIES ARE STILL PUT IN SWADDLING-CLOTHES. THE VISITING NURSES TRY TO DISCOURAGE THIS CUSTOM were actually registered in mortality statistics. When the first dog-days struck the city, the babies went down before the heat. All the elements that make unendurable the living conditions of a great city's poor were registered in the sudden upward shoot of the curve of baby deaths. So perpendicularly does this "curve" run up with the first heat, so suddenly does it drop with the return of cool fall days, that it has earned for itself the classic name of the "Eiffel Tower."

Foundling Death-Rate Sometimes One Hundred Per Cent

Politics-ridden hospitals and mismanaged foundling asylums were the refuges provided in the name of charity for sick and deserted babies. In the foundling asylums, even under the kindest care, it was no uncommon thing for every one of the children to die before it had outgrown babyhood. In other words, they had a one hundred per cent death-rate.

Only one man recognized at this time — what is now admittedly a platitude among child-saving experts — that babies can never be raised wholesale. But institutions were not seeking light, for when Dr. Abraham Jacobi called attention to the high mortality rate in a famous foundling home, he was expelled from the board for his indiscretion.

Meanwhile, what were the city authorities doing about it all? Just this: Beginning with 1876, a corps of doctors from the Department of Health was mustered out each summer to go a-visiting through the tenements in search of sick babies. And to this policy of dipping out the Atlantic with a teaspoon they faithfully adhered until four years ago. In 1908, with the establishment of the Division of Child Hygiene, a great change came over the attitude of the city fathers in regard to their own measure of responsibility in letting the babies fall ill. Meanwhile private individuals and associations cleared the way.

Two Young Mothers Start a Great Movement

Twenty-three years ago, two young mothers who were familiar with conditions in the tenement districts were preparing milk for their own children according to the newly invented process of sterilization, when one of them suddenly said:

"Why can't we manage to supply the children of the poor with sterilized milk this summer?"

Inquiries resulted in the discovery of a Jewish doctor who in connection with his practice on the East Side had had the same happy thought, and was attempting, as far as his limited means permitted, to supply sterilized milk to his young patients. The three enthusiasts joined forces in collecting money and devising apparatus. And thus Mrs. Isaac and Mrs. Felix Adler and Dr. Koplik established in New York City the first pure-milk depot in the United States.

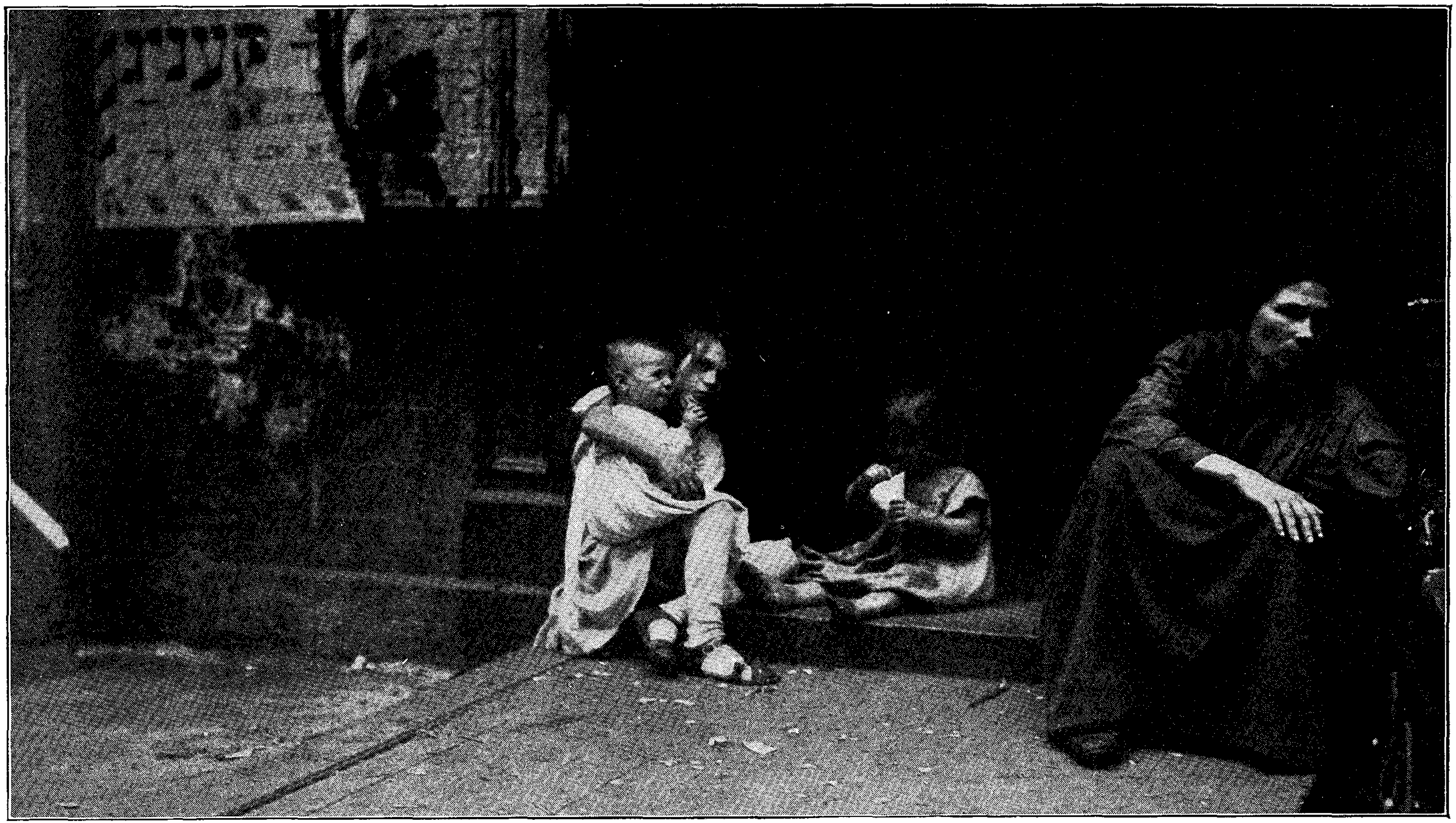
At the corner of Essex and Broome streets it stands now, an adjunct of the Good Samaritan Dispensary. In a large, airy room, surrounded by great copper sterilizers, sits the blue-and-white-clad resident deity, the matron who has had charge since the depot opened that first summer with its original provision of stoves and laundry boilers.

Newer depots with more modern equipments have sprung up since; controversies have raged over the relative value of sterilized, pasteurized, and raw milk; yet the Good Samaritan has not lost a particle of its popularity. The doctors of the neighborhood who have since moved away to other parts of the city still refer their little patients from uptown back to Essex and Broome streets to have their modified milk prescriptions put up. The pioneer depot stands to-day a monument to the first three people in America to realize that, if babies must be artificially fed, they should have milk of the safest and best.

Cows' Milk for Calves, Not Babies

If babies must be artificially fed. Too ready acceptance of the necessity marked off the American from the European method of going about the baby-saving. Budin explained the danger involved in making it too easy for the mother to feed her baby artificially, and into this error the American cities, led by New York, unfortunately fell. Excellent as has been their work, and successful their effort to raise the whole standard of city milk supplies, the fact remains that milk depots which are merely milk depots have served to demoralize the mothers. The lesson taught by the siege of Paris and by the Lancashire cotton famine has been strengthened and driven home by every subsequent study and investigation — that cow's milk, which nature constituted to suit the four stomachs of a seventy-pound calf destined to graduate to a ration of grass and hay, can not even in its pristine purity and by any formula of modification be made entirely suitable for the one small stomach of a seven-pound baby which must learn later to cope with a varied diet. English experiments have shown that, other things being equal, fifteen bottle-fed babies die to every one nursling.

In the twenty-three years since the Good Samaritan was established, policy and adminis-



Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

SNAPSHOT TAKEN ON THE YIDDISH EAST SIDE OF NEW YORK. THE GIRL WITH THE BABY IS ONE OF THE THOUSANDS OF "LITTLE MOTHERS" AMONG THE POOR WHO HAVE BEEN SAID TO BE THE REAL REASON FOR THE HIGH BABY DEATH-RATE. A NEW MOVEMENT HAS BEEN STARTED FOR GIVING THESE TEN- AND TWELVE-YEAR-OLD GIRLS EXPERT TRAINING IN NURSING tration of milk depots have changed accordingly, until, in the remarkable record of 1911, the results of the change are plainly visible.

Four years after the pioneer came the famous chain of stations established throughout the city by Nathan Straus. The Diet Kitchen Association had been distributing milk, in addition to its other activities, since 1873. In 1890 it began to devote itself altogether to this work. A few years later the Bureau of Charities started a series of stations in neglected Brooklyn — a work which was afterward taken over by the Children's Aid Society. A few other associations and settlements followed suit.

Slowly, year after year, it became evident that there was more to the matter of saving young babies' lives than the supply of clean milk, upon which New York and other American cities had placed such emphasis. Knowledge of the foreign demonstrations that in every possible case the child should be raised on the natural food of its mother's breast came to the workers in this country; and this theory was gradually accepted by them, until last summer, when the New York Milk Committee and the Department of Health between them opened forty-six depots committed to the Budin doctrine, and added thereto the very important American contribution of the visiting nurse. In one year the trick was turned. Milk was used frankly as a bait to lure the mothers into the weekly consultations; but, as far as possible, it was given to the mother herself to drink.

To teach the mothers how to modify and prepare the milk according to the doctor's prescription, the nurse went directly to the home and gave her lesson in the tenement kitchen, using only the implements she found there, or such as could be bought from the push-cart. When she had allayed suspicion and made friends with the family, she took pains to explain again and again, and in detail, just why pickles and cucumbers, swaddling-clothes and cognac, are bad for babies; she taught the need of fresh air and regular hours for feeding and sleep, the practical ends to be gained from the daily bath and general cleanliness; she taught when a doctor was needed and when to get one. She distributed far and wide the baby hygiene posters published by the Department of Health in the simplest phrasing of four languages.

"Can you make the mothers understand?" the writer asked doubtfully; and a nurse answered briefly: "Come visiting with me to-morrow and see for yourself."

In Mrs. Godoni's Kitchen

What we found was impressive — and hopeful. In the disorder of Mrs. Godoni's kitchen lay a tiny baby asleep in a large arm-chair. Flies swarmed in the room, but a netting enveloped the improvised bed; the baby had just had his morning bath, and, though his little gown was coarse, it was extraordinarily fresh and clean. On a table stood a large soap-box containing his wardrobe; the nurse made a dive, fished from the box a fat roll of coarse lace, and triumphantly waved it aloft.

"The swaddling-cloth," she explained. "You'll notice it's in the *bottom* of the box and that it's never been unrolled!"

Mrs. Godoni was an old pupil, and an apt one. She hung on the words of her visitor, and bowed us to the door with grave courtesy.

"Now," said the nurse, "I'll show you a less promising family next door"; and she led the way into the Fratelloni tenement.

As we entered, Mrs. Fratelloni with a guilty air was hastily wiping the mouth of round-eyed Tessa. The nurse advanced without ceremony, seized the baby, and took one whiff.

"You've given her watermelon again, Mrs. Fratelloni!" she exclaimed threateningly.

"Na; only da rind to suck-a," answered our hostess innocently, opening her hand and displaying assorted bits of perfectly green fruit.

"To-morrow," said my guide grimly, "I hope and pray that Tessa will be sick. It is only when I have a chance to say 'I told you so' to a mother like that, and prove I am right by nursing the baby well again, that I win any attention in the future."

Live Babies, $50; Dead Babies, $200

Down the crowded street at that moment came a procession of carriages, headed by a resplendent white hearse drawn by horses clad in white net and tassels. The procession halted at the little church on the block below. Drawn up at the curb, surrounded by an admiring crowd of neighbors, stood three open carriages heaped high with floral offerings. The pomp and sordid splendor marked the progress of a baby's funeral and brought to mind the words of the dean of American baby-savers, Dr. Jacobi: "Half a million babies born and dead cost at least a hundred million dollars utterly lost to the private and national treasuries."

I turned to my guide and asked:

"What is the per capita cost, at your milk station, of keeping the babies alive?"

"Fifty dollars a year," said the nurse.

Meanwhile, five years ago one of the private charitable societies had sent a corps of nurses visiting and teaching through the tenements of the nineteenth ward, and so success-

Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

SHOWING THE MOTHER IN AN EAST SIDE TENEMENT HOW TO GIVE HER BABY A SPONGE BATH

fully did this reduce the local death-rate that the newly established Division of Child Hygiene of the city health department adopted the same policy the following year. Each year the plan was enlarged, and in 1911 the whole city was covered in this way.

As soon as the hot weather began, the nurses connected with the public schools were sent visiting. They taught general hygiene exactly as the milk-depot nurses did; they had the social resources of the city at their fingers' ends; they referred cases of destitution to the charitable societies, sent sick babies away to country homes and floating hospitals, and concentrated all their attention on keeping well babies well. They organized classes of mothers, and turned them over to the doctor to teach in parks and play-grounds, on roofs and recreation piers.

In 1910, out of every 1,000 babies born, 134 died within the year. In 1911 the death-rate had dropped to 120, registering the rescue of some 1,200 lives in one year.

Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

Of the 16,987 babies under the care of the visiting nurses, but 238 died (a rate of 14 to 1,000), while among the 11,644 little patrons of the milk stations, there were but 294 deaths (a rate of 25 to 1,000); to appreciate the full significance of these figures, one must bear in mind that the 28,631 babies under special care were those among whom the mortality was ordinarily highest.

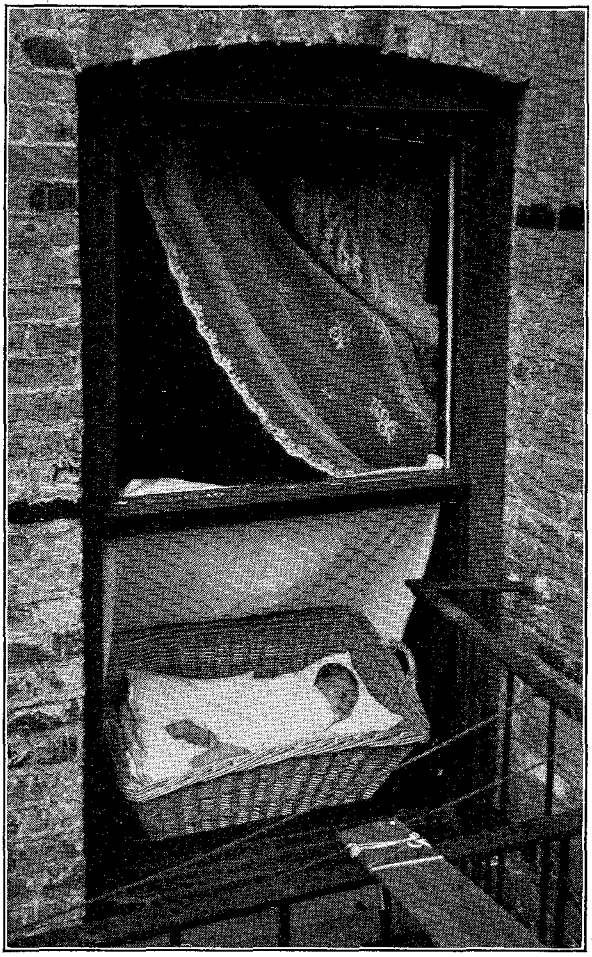
For the first time, the summer death curve did not shoot upward with the hot weather; the Eiffel Tower was overthrown!

But the master stroke of the New York campaign is yet to be told. This is the organization of the Little Mothers' Leagues.

The plan originated in the Division of Child Hygiene. "In a book of John Spargo's," said Dr. Baker, chief of the division, "I came upon the statement that the real reason for our high baby death-rate was the little mother. The little mother! That pathetic figure, a girl of ten or a dozen years, deprived of her heritage of childhood, forced into the position of foster-mother to the family baby. I pondered this discouraging thought for a while, and then I decided that there was no such thing as the elimination of the little mother so long as we have the poor. The thing to do was to convert her from a menace into an ally: train her to care for the family baby now, and the training will not be amiss when she becomes a mother in actuality. Among our foreign population it is much easier to teach the children than the adults, anyway; and so we thought out the Little Mothers' Leagues."

In the cool basement rooms of the East Side schoolhouses the experiment began during a summer vacation. All the girls of the upper grades were welcomed, whether there happened to be babies in the family just then or not. The doctor lectured, and the nurse, provided with ammunition in the way of bath-tub, feeding-bottles, sponges, alcohol-lamps, etc., borrowed a baby from her audience and demonstrated. Between them, they taught hygiene of the home, bathing and clothing of the baby, the importance of fresh air, care of milk, improvised icing, cleansing of bottles and nipples, preparation of barley water, etc.

The idea took hold, and soon twenty thousand tenement children were attending weekly classes. Each child carries with her a cherished note-book entitled "What I Have Done for the Little Mothers' League," and in it she records her triumphs in the neighborhood.



Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

A SLEEPING ARRANGEMENT FOR TENEMENT BABIES RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF HEALTH

Here are some of the records:

One day I walked in the street and I saw a woman giving a baby a lolypop which had been sucked some time by her elder son. I went over and told her that lolypops or any such food was the same as giving the child some poison. She asked me how I knew and I told her I had learned it at the Little Mothers' League. She took the subject under consideration and threw the lolypop away.

One day when I was on the pier with my little brother a man who took care of a baby gave it a bottle of coffee. I saw the bottle was dirty and told him the baby would get sick. He said to me, "Mind your business." I said I belong to the Little Mothers' League and know how to take care of babies. The next time I saw the baby sleeping with a lolypop in his mouth, the flies were flying on it, but my little brother was covered with a veil and I fanned him. The next week I saw the baby and he looked sick. I told the father to go to the doctor. Now he took my advice and when he came back he said the baby had summer complaint, but in three weeks the baby was well again. I think the father will never give the baby those things.

One day as I was walking in the street I saw a baby in a carriage fast asleep and a empty bottle in its mouth. So I saw the mother from the child and I told her nipples is a real death for a child. When the baby is having its sleep, the nipple should be in a glass of borax water ready for its meal. The mother from that child thanked me very much.

One East Side League last summer spent its treasury of four dollars, made up entirely of penny dues, on restoring a sick baby to health. Frequently a member will bring her mother to a meeting to settle a point of family dispute. In the Italian quarter the ice-cream-sandwich man bitterly complains that business is ruined.

At each meeting a complete lesson is given, explaining in full how to cope with some one constantly recurring crisis of baby life. Then come questions and answers, and last an original play, turning upon the dramatic rescue of a sick baby by a Little Mother.

No one who visits a League meeting can come away unmoved by the pathos of these little girls, who should be playing with dolls, burdened with the cares of vicarious motherhood. On the other hand, those who have invested years in the task of breaking through the ignorance and superstition and doubt which make this such uphill work, greet the idea of reaching in through the younger generation as the promptings of little less than genius. For these little girls are the mothers of the future, and in their hands rests the fate of the next generation.

Last fall an extra appropriation to the Division of Child Hygiene enabled Dr. Baker to go to the New York Milk Committee, whose excellent work was financed entirely by private contributions, and say: "You have demonstrated what these milk stations will do for New York. We are convinced that baby lives are too important to be left any longer to the spasmodic generosity of the subscribing public. We will undertake the milk depots and the instructive nursing, and leave you free to experiment further."

The Milk Committee has taken up its stand once more this summer on the firing-line of experimentation, and is training the attention of its skilled staff full upon the question of prenatal care and education. For in New York's record of thirty years the extent to which the baby's foes have been overthrown are as follows:

Deaths from contagious diseases reduced..70 per cent
Deaths from respiratory diseases reduced..38 per cent
Deaths from diarrhea reduced..........37 per cent
Deaths from congenital debility reduced... 4 per cent

How far have we come, then, toward insuring this dangerous business of being a baby? Is New York City, the laboratory and experiment station of the nation, following all the paths that lead through the wilderness of civilization to an irreducible minimum of baby deaths?

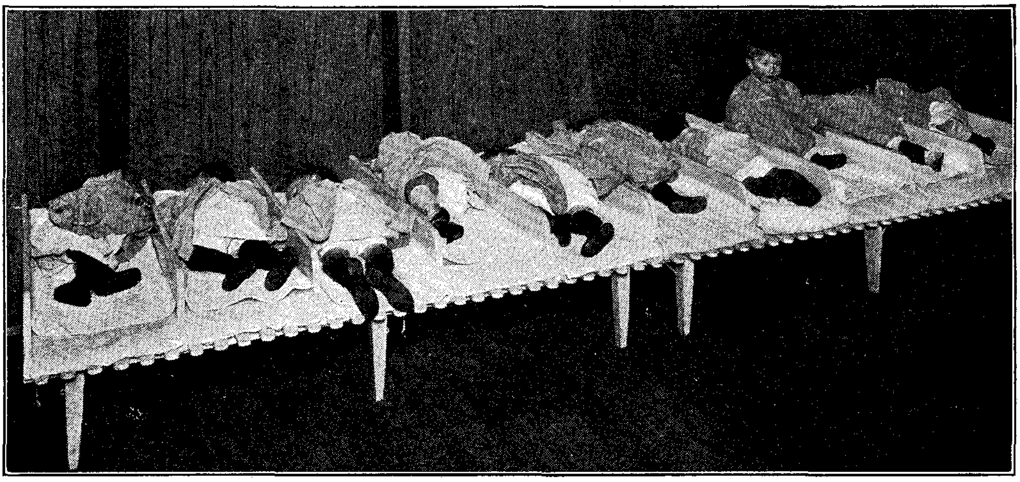
With intelligent philanthropy leading the van, and the Division of Child Hygiene generously supported, a residuum of seemingly unnecessary deaths still remains.

"Widowers' Houses"

Visit the Little Mothers' League and hear the doctor's directions about "putting the baby to sleep in a cool, darkened, airy room"; then, after the class, follow the children out into the blazing East Side street with its ceaseless riot of noise and smells. Get one of the little mothers to take you into the three-room tenements in which she lives with her father and mother and five other children. Note the two-foot "air-shaft," acting like a giant culture-tube for the propagation of disease. Note the bedroom without any window. If you chance to discover that the owner of this particular tenement is the famous philanthropist who contributes so largely to the baby-saving charities, you will have disclosed beneath the cloak of charity one of the weapons with which the economic foe still strikes below the belt.

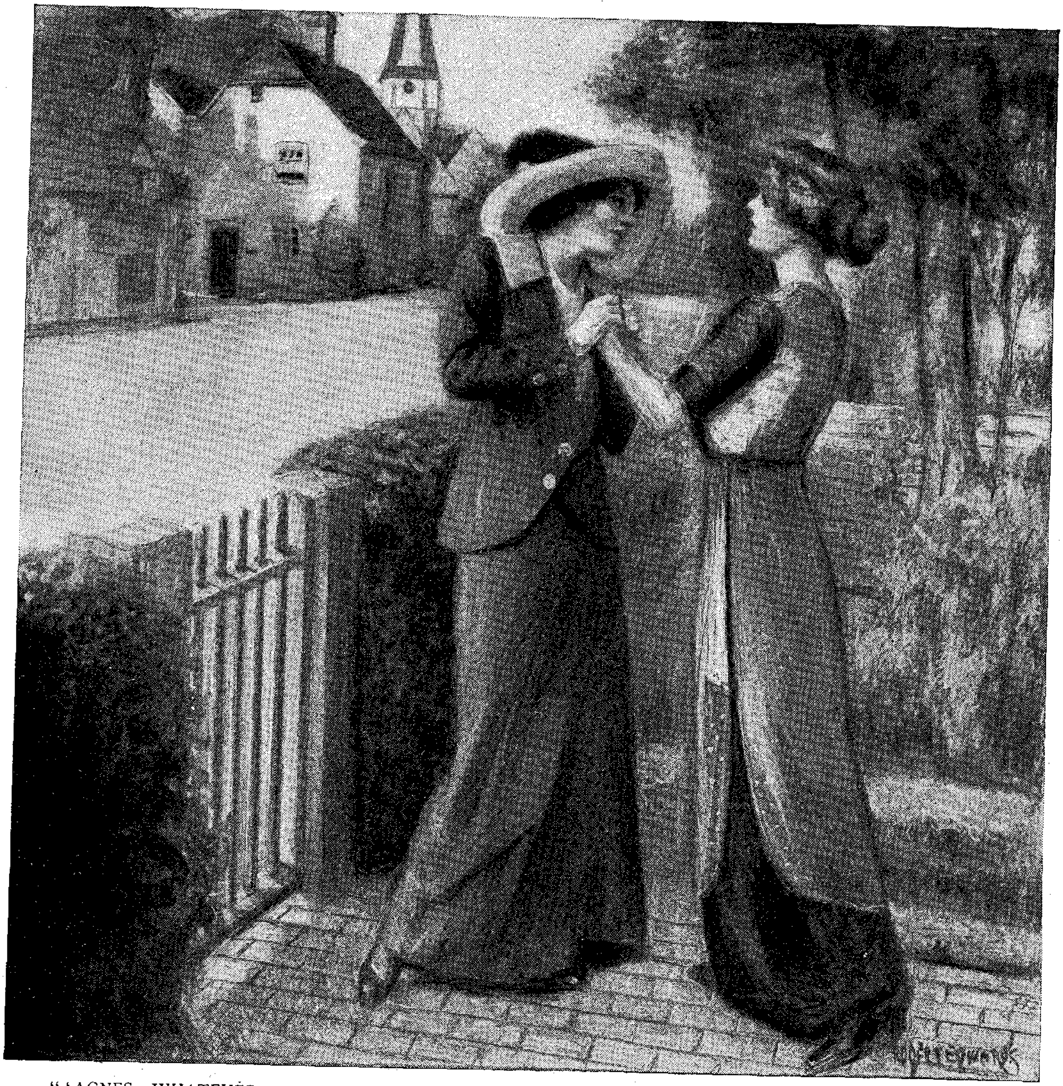
As a "stint" which New York City has set herself to do, her baby-saving campaign has been magnificent.

After all, the threat of the unconquered enemy is not merely a question of baby lives. It is a menace to the integrity of the family and of the nation.



Photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals

BABIES TAKING A NAP IN THE DAY NURSERY OF THE EAST SIDE HOUSE SETTLEMENT



"'AGNES, WHATEVER HAPPENS, YOU MUST PITY, AND — AND, IF YOU CAN, UNDERSTAND ME'"

TWO WIVES

BY

MARIE BELLOC LOWNDES

AUTHOR OF "GREAT FRENCH MYSTERIES," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT EDWARDS

MRS. BARLOW, the prettiest and the happiest and the best dressed of the young wives of Summerfield, was walking toward the Catholic church. She was going to consult the old priest as to her duty to an unsatisfactory servant; for Agnes Barlow was a conscientious as well as a pretty and a happy woman.

Foolish people are fond of quoting a foolish gibe: "Be good, and you may be happy; but you will not have a good time." The wise, however, soon become aware that if, in the course of life's journey, you achieve goodness and happiness, you will almost certainly have a good time too.

So, at least, Agnes Barlow had found in her own short life. Her excellent parents had built one of the first new houses in what had then been the pretty, old-fashioned village of Summerfield, some fifteen miles from London. There she had been born; there she had spent delightful years at the big convent school over the hill; there she had grown up into a singularly pretty girl; and there, finally,—it had seemed quite final to Agnes,—she had met the clever, fascinating young lawyer, Frank Barlow.

Frank had soon become the lover all her friends had envied her, and then the husband whose income was becoming steadily larger and larger, and who was still — so he was fond of saying and of proving in a dozen dear little daily ways — as much in love with her as on the day they were married. They lived in a charming house called the Haven, and they were the proud parents of a fine little boy, named Francis after his father, who never had any of the tiresome ailments which afflict other children.

But strange, dreadful things do happen, even in this delightful world! So thought Agnes Barlow on this pleasant May afternoon; for, as she walked to church, this pretty, happy, good woman found her thoughts dwelling uncomfortably on another woman, her sometime intimate friend and contemporary, who was neither good nor happy.

This was Teresa Maldo, the lovely half-Spanish girl who had been her favorite schoolmate at the convent over the hill.

Poor, foolish, unhappy, wicked Teresa! Only ten days ago Teresa had done a thing so extraordinary, so awful, so unprecedented, that Agnes Barlow had thought of little else ever since. She had eloped, gone right away from her home and her husband, and with a married man!

Teresa and Agnes were the same age; they had had the same upbringing; they were both — in a very different way, however — beautiful; and they had each been married, six years before, on the same day of the month. But how different had been their subsequent fates!

Teresa had at once discovered that her husband drank. But she loved him, and for a while it seemed as if marriage would reform Maldo. Unfortunately, this happy state of things did not last: he again began to drink; and people soon had reason to shake their heads over the way Teresa Maldo flirted.

Men, you see, were so sorry for this lovely young woman, blessed (or cursed) with what old-fashioned folk call "the come-hither eye," that they made it their business to console her for such a worthless husband as was Maldo! No wonder Teresa and Agnes drifted apart; no wonder Frank Barlow soon forbade Agnes to go on accepting Mrs. Maldo's invitations.

But an odd thing had happened about a fortnight ago. And it was to this odd happening that Agnes Barlow's mind persistently recurred each time she found herself alone.

About three days before Teresa Maldo had done the mad and wicked thing of which all Summerfield was still talking, she had paid a long call on Agnes Barlow.

The unwelcome guest had stayed a very long time; she had talked wildly and rather strangely; and Agnes, looking back, was glad to remember that no one else had come in while her old schoolfellow was there.

When, at last, Teresa Maldo had made up her mind to go (luckily, some minutes before Frank was due home from town), Agnes accompanied her to the gate of the Haven, and there the other had turned round and said such odd things.

"I came to tell you something!" she had exclaimed. "But, now that I see you looking so happy, so pretty, and—forgive me for saying so, Agnes—so horribly good, I feel that I can't tell you! But, Agnes, whatever happens, you must pity, and—and, if you can, understand me——"

Yes, it was now painfully clear to Agnes Barlow that Teresa had come that day to tell her once devoted friend of the wicked thing she meant to do; and more than once pretty Mrs. Barlow had asked herself uneasily whether she had been wanting in sympathy during those two long hours — whether she could have done anything to stop Teresa on her downward course.

But no; Agnes felt her conscience clear. How would it have been possible for her even to discuss so shameful a possibility as that of a woman leaving her husband with another man?

Agnes thought of the two sinners with a touch of fascinated curiosity. They were said to be in Paris, and Teresa was probably having a very good time — a wildly amusing, exciting time.

She even told herself, did this pretty, happy, good young married woman, that it was strange, and not very fair, that vice and pleasure should always go together! It was just a little irritating to know that Teresa would never again be troubled by the kind of worries that played quite an important part in Agnes' own blameless life. Never again, for instance, would Teresa's cook give her notice, as Agnes' cook had given her notice that morning — it was about that matter she wished to see Father Ferguson, for it was through the priest she had heard of the impertinent Irish girl who cooked so well, but who had such an independent manner and who would *not* wear a cap!

Yes, it certainly seemed unfair that Teresa would now be rid of all domestic worries — that henceforth the woman who had sinned would live in luxurious hotels, motoring and shopping all day, going to the theater or to a music-hall each night.

The few acquaintances Mrs. Barlow met on her way smiled and nodded, but, as she was walking rather quickly, no one tried to stop her. She had chosen the back way to the church because it was the prettiest way, and also because it would take her by a house where a friend of hers was living in lodgings.

And suddenly the very friend in question — his name was Ferrier — came out of his lodgings. He had a tall, slight, active figure; he was dressed in a blue serge suit, and, though it was still early spring, he wore a straw hat.

Agnes smiled a little inward smile. She was, as we already know, a very good as well as a happy and pretty woman. But as pretty a woman as was Agnes Barlow meets with frequent pleasant occasions of withstanding temptation, of which those about her, especially her dear parents and her kind husband, are curiously unknowing. And the tall, well-set-up masculine figure now hurrying toward her with such eager steps played a considerable part in Agnes' life, if only by constantly providing her with occasions of acquiring merit.

Agnes knew very well — even the least imaginative woman is always acutely conscious of such a fact — that, had she not been a prudent and a ladylike as well as (of course) a very good woman, this clever, agreeable, interesting young man would have made love to her. As it was, he (of course) did nothing of the kind. He did not even try to flirt with her, as our innocent Agnes understood that much-tried verb; and she regarded their friendship as a pleasant interlude in her placid, well-regulated existence, and as a most excellent influence on his more agitated life.

The man lifted his hat. He smiled down into Agnes' blue eyes. What very pretty, nay, what beautiful eyes they were! Deeply, exquisitely blue, but unshadowed, as innocent of guile as are a child's eyes.

"Somehow, I had a kind of feeling that you would be coming by just now," he said in a rather hesitating voice; "so I left my work and came out on chance."

Now, Agnes was very much interested in Mr. Ferrier's work. Mr. Ferrier was not only a writer — the only writer she had ever known — he was also a poet. She had been pleasantly thrilled the day he had given her a slim little book on each page of which was a poem. This gift had been made when they had known each other only two months, and he had inscribed it: "From G. G. F. to A. M. B."

Mr. Ferrier had a charming studio flat in Chelsea, that odd, remote place where London artists live, far from the pleasant London of the shops and theaters which was all Agnes knew of the town near which she dwelt. But he had spent the last two summers in Summerfield, and he was a geat deal at the Haven.

When with Mr. Ferrier — and they were much together during the long week-days — Agnes Barlow made a point of often speaking of dear Frank and of Frank's love for her — not, of course, in a way that any one could have regarded as silly, but in a natural, simple way.

How easy, how very easy, it is to keep this kind of friendship — friendship between a man and a woman — within bounds! And how terribly sad it was to think that Teresa Maldo had not known how to do that easy thing! But then, Teresa's lover had been a married man, separated from his wife, and that doubtless made all the difference. Agnes Barlow could assure herself in all sincerity that, had Mr. Ferrier been the husband of another woman, she would never have allowed him to become her friend to the extent that he was now.

Mr. Ferrier — Agnes, naturally, never allowed herself to think of him as Gerald — held a newspaper in his hand. It was an evening paper in which his verses were often printed.

"I was really on my way to the Haven," he observed, "for there are a few verses of mine in the *P. M. G.* which I am anxious you should read. Shall I go on and leave it at your house, or will you take it now? And then, if I may, I will call for it some time to-morrow. Should I be likely to find you in about four o'clock?"

"Yes, I'll be in then, and I think I'll take it now." And then — for she was walking very slowly, and Ferrier, with his hands behind his back, kept pace with her — Agnes could not resist looking down at the open sheet.

The poem was called "My Lady of the Snow," and it told in very pretty, complicated language of a beautiful, pure woman whom the writer loved in a desperate but respectful way.

She grew rather red. "I must hurry on, for I am going to church," she said a little stiffly. "Good evening, Mr. Ferrier. Yes, I will keep the paper till to-morrow, if I may. I should like to show it to Frank. He hasn't been to the office to-day, for he isn't very well, and he will like to see an evening paper."

Mr. Ferrier lifted his hat with a rather sad look and turned back toward the house where he lodged. And as Agnes walked on she felt disturbed and uncomfortable. Her clever friend had evidently been grieved by her apparent lack of appreciation of his poem.

She went into the church, knelt down and said a prayer. Then she got up and walked through into the sacristy. Father Ferguson was almost certain to be there just now.

Agnes Barlow had known the old priest all her life. He had baptized her; he had been chaplain at the convent during the years she had been at school there; and now he had come back to be parish priest at Summerfield.

When with Father Ferguson, Agnes somehow never felt quite so good as she did when she was by herself or with a strange priest; and yet, Father Ferguson was always very kind to her.

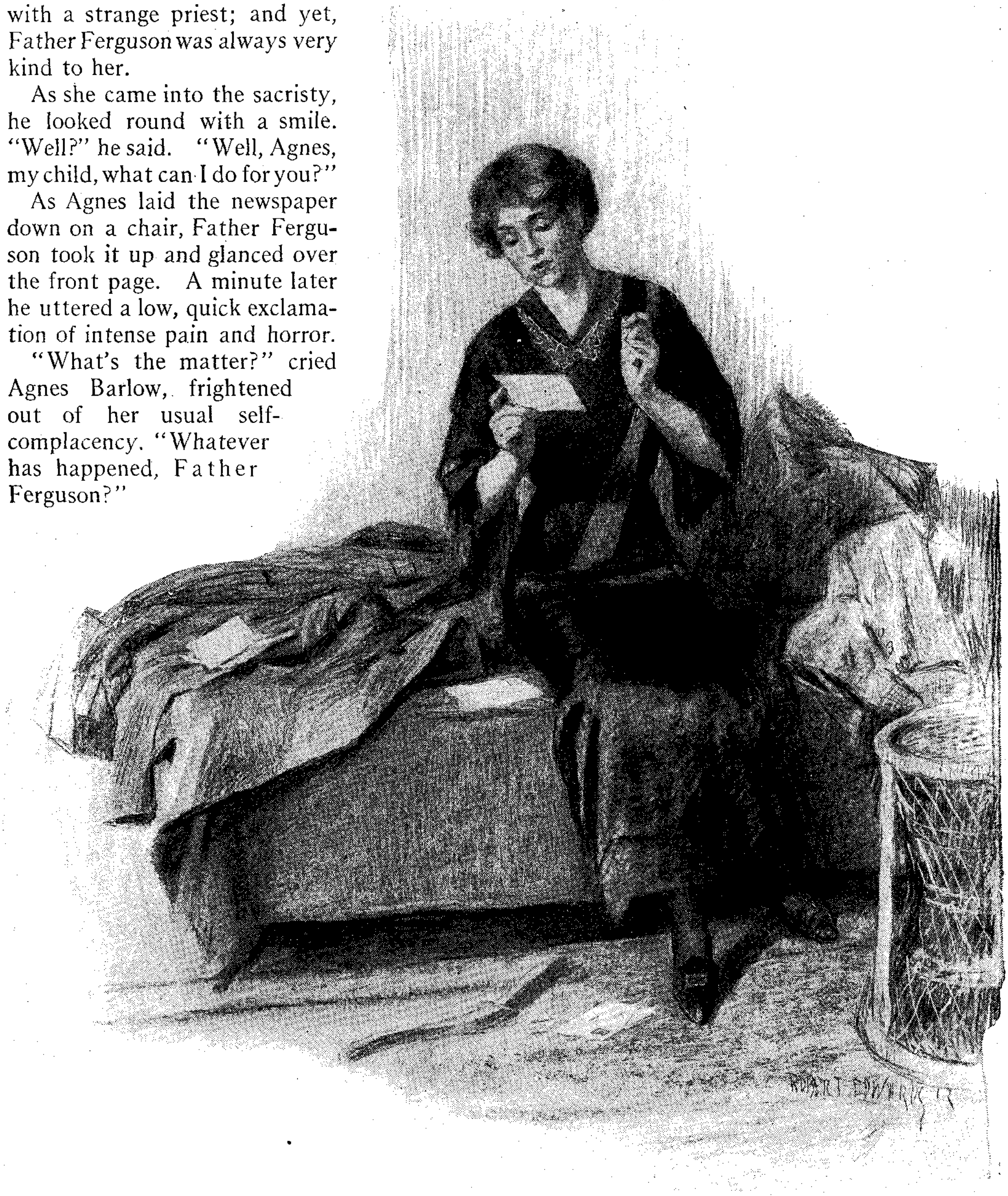
As she came into the sacristy, he looked round with a smile. "Well?" he said. "Well, Agnes, my child, what can I do for you?"

As Agnes laid the newspaper down on a chair, Father Ferguson took it up and glanced over the front page. A minute later he uttered a low, quick exclamation of intense pain and horror.

"What's the matter?" cried Agnes Barlow, frightened out of her usual self-complacency. "Whatever has happened, Father Ferguson?"

He pointed with shaking finger to a small paragraph. It was headed "Suicide of a Lady at Dover," and Agnes read the few lines with bewildered and shocked amazement.

Teresa Maldo, whom she had visioned only a few minutes ago as leading a merry, gloriously careless life with her lover, was dead. She had thrown herself out of a bedroom window in a hotel at Dover, and she had



"IN THE POCKETS OF HER HUSBAND'S COAT SHE HAD FOUND THREE LETTERS. EACH OF THEM, WRITTEN IN A WOMAN'S SLOPING HAND, WAS A LOVE LETTER SIGNED 'JANEY'" been killed instantly, dashed to pieces on the stones below!

Agnes stared down at the curt, cold little paragraph with excited horror. She was six-and-twenty, but she had never seen death, and, as far as she knew, the girls with whom she had been at school were all living. Teresa — poor unhappy, sinful Teresa — had been the first to die, and by her own hand.

The old priest's eyes slowly brimmed over with tears. "Poor, unhappy child!" he said, with a break in his voice. "Poor, unfortunate Teresa! I did not think — I should never have believed that she would seek — and find — this terrible way out."

Agnes was a little shocked at his broken words. True, Teresa had been very unhappy, and it was right to pity her; but she had also been very wicked; and now she had put, as it were, the seal on her wickedness by killing herself.

"Three or four days before she went away, she came and saw me," the priest went on in a low, pained voice. "I did everything in my power to stop her, but I could do nothing — she had given her word!"

"Given her word?" repeated Agnes wonderingly.

"Yes," said Father Ferguson; "she had given that wretched, that wickedly selfish man her promise. She believed that if she broke her word he would kill himself. I begged her to go and see some woman,— some kind, pitiful, understanding woman,— but I suppose she feared lest such a one would dissuade her to more purpose than I was able to do."

Agnes looked at him with troubled eyes.

"She was very dear to my heart," the priest went on. "She was always a generous, unselfish child, and she was very fond of you, Agnes."

Agnes' throat tightened. What Father Ferguson said was only too true. Teresa had always been a very generous and unselfish girl, and very, very fond of her. She wondered remorsefully if she could have done or said anything that day poor Teresa had come and spoken such strange, wild words ——

"It seems so awful," she said in a low voice, "so very, very awful to think that we may not even pray for her soul, Father Ferguson."

"Not pray for her soul?" the priest repeated. "Why should we not pray for the poor child's soul? I shall certainly pray for Teresa's soul every day till I die."

"But — but how can you do that, when she killed herself?"

He looked at her, surprised. "And do you really so far doubt God's mercy? Surely we may hope — nay, trust — that Teresa had time to make an act of contrition?" And then he muttered something — it sounded like a line or two of poetry — which Agnes did not quite catch; but she felt, as she often did feel when with Father Ferguson, at once rebuked and rebellious.

Of course there *might* have been time for Teresa to make an act of contrition. But every one knows that to take one's life is a deadly sin. Agnes felt quite sure that if it ever occurred to herself to do such a thing she would go straight to hell. Still, she was used to obey this old priest, and that even when she did not agree with him. So she followed him into the church, and side by side they knelt down and each said a separate prayer for the soul of sinful Teresa Maldo.

As Agnes Barlow walked slowly and soberly home — this time by the highroad — she tried to remember the words, the lines of poetry, that Father Ferguson had muttered. They at once haunted and eluded her memory. Surely they could not be

Between the window and the ground,
She mercy sought and mercy found?

No, Agnes was sure that he had not said "window," and yet window seemed the only word that would fit the case. And he had not said "*she* mercy found"; he had said "*he* mercy sought and mercy found"— of that Agnes felt sure, and that, too, was odd.

Then she suddenly bethought herself, with more annoyance than the matter was worth, that in her agitation she had left Mr. Ferrier's paper in the sacristy. She did not like the thought that Father Ferguson would probably read those pretty, curious verses, "My Lady of the Snow."

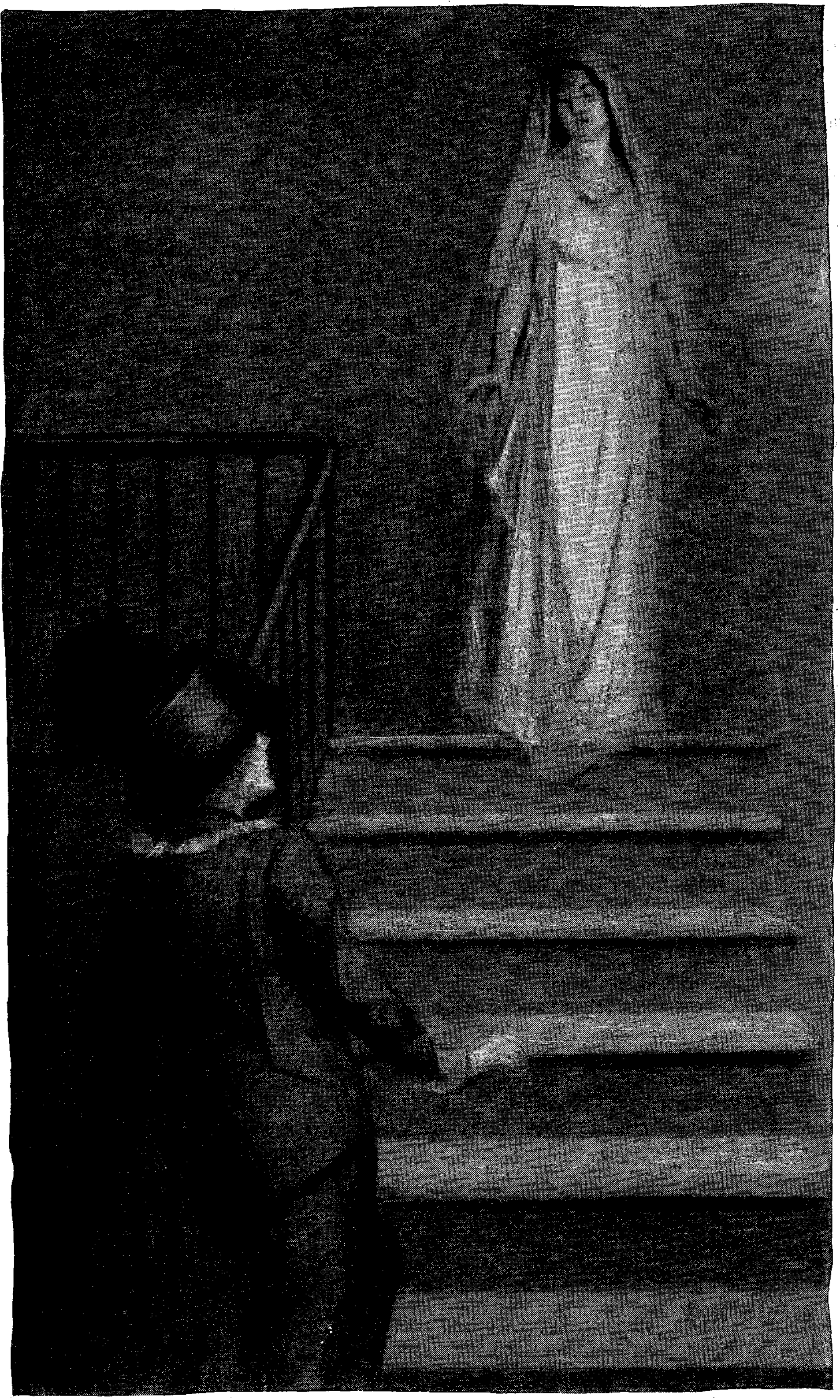
Also, Agnes had actually forgotten to speak to the old priest of her impertinent cook!

II

We find Agnes Barlow again walking in Summerfield; but this time she is hurrying along the straight, unlovely cinder-strewn path which forms a short cut from the back of the Haven to Summerfield station; and the still, heavy calm of a late November afternoon broods over the rough ground on either side of her.

It is nearly six months since Teresa Maldo's elopement and consequent suicide, and now no one ever speaks of poor Teresa, no one seems to remember that she ever lived, excepting perhaps Father Ferguson, and he never mentions her.

As for Agnes herself, life had crowded far too many happenings in these six months for her to give more than a passing thought to Teresa. An awful, and to her an incredible, thing had



"SHE STARED UP WITH FEARFUL, FASCINATED EYES AT THE IMMOBILE FIGURE, AND HER GAZE TRAVELED STEALTHILY UP TO THE WHITE, PASSIONLESS FACE, DRAINED OF ALL EXPRESSION SAVE THAT OF WATCHFUL CONCERN AND UNDERSTANDING TENDERNESS" happened to Agnes Barlow. The roof of her snug and happy house of life had fallen in, and she lay, blinded and maimed, beneath the fragments which had been hurled down on her in one terrible moment.

Yes, it had all happened in a moment — so she now reminded herself, with the dull ache that never left her.

It was just after she came back from Westgate with little Francis. The child had been ailing for the first time in his life, and she had taken him to the seaside for six weeks.

There, in a day, it had turned from summer to winter, raining as it rains only at the seaside; and suddenly Agnes had made up her mind to go back to her own nice, comfortable home a whole week before Frank expected her back.

Agnes sometimes acted like that — on a quick impulse; she did so to her own undoing on that dull rainy day.

When she reached Summerfield, it was to find her telegram to her husband lying unopened on the hall table of the Haven. Frank, it seemed, had slept in town the night before. Not that that mattered, so she told herself gleefully, full of the pleasant joy of being again in her own home: the surprise would be the greater and the more welcome when Frank did come back.

Having nothing better to do that first afternoon, Agnes had gone up to her husband's dressing-room in order to look over his summer clothes before sending them to the cleaner. In her careful playing-at-housewifely fashion, she had turned out the pockets of his cricketing coat. There, a little to her surprise, she had found three letters, and idle curiosity as to Frank's invitations during her long stay away — Frank was deservedly popular with the ladies of Summerfield and, indeed, with all women — caused her to take the three letters out of their envelopes. . . .

In a moment — how terrible that it should take but a moment to shatter the fabric of a human being's innocent house of life! — Agnes had seen what had happened to her — to him. For each of these letters, written in the same woman's sloping hand, was a love letter signed "Janey"; and in each the writer, in a plaintive, ladylike, but insistent and reproachful way, asked Frank for money.

Even now, though nearly seven weeks had gone by since then, Agnes could recall with painful vividness the sick, cold feeling that had come over her — a feeling of fear rather than anger, of fear and desperate humiliation.

Locking the door of the dressing-room, she had searched eagerly — a dishonorable thing to do, as she knew well. And soon she had found other letters — letters and bills: bills of meals at restaurants, showing that her husband and a companion had constantly dined and supped at the Savoy, the Carlton, and Princes. To those restaurants where he had taken her (Agnes) two or three times a year, laughing and grumbling at the expense, he had taken this — this person again and again in the short time his wife had been away.

As to the further letters, all they proved was that Frank had first met "Janey Cartwright" over some law business of hers, connected — even Agnes saw the irony of it — in some shameful way with another man; for, tied together, were a few notes signed with the writer's full name, of which the first began:

> *Dear Mr. Barlow:*
>
> Forgive me for writing to your private address [etc., etc.]

The ten days that followed had seared Agnes' soul. Frank had been so dreadfully affectionate. He had pretended — she felt sure it was all pretense — to be so glad to see her again, though sometimes she caught him looking at her with cowed, miserable eyes.

And then, on the last of those terrible ten days, Gerald Ferrier had come down to Summerfield, and both she and Frank had pressed him to stay to dinner. He had done so, though aware that something was wrong, and he had been extraordinarily kind, sympathetic, unquestioning. But as he was leaving he had said a word to his host: "I feel worried about Mrs. Barlow" — Agnes heard him through the window. "She doesn't look the thing, somehow! How would it be if I asked her to go with me to a private view? It might cheer her up. Perhaps she would lunch with me afterward?" And Frank had eagerly assented.

Since then Agnes had gone up to London, if not every day, very nearly every day, and Mr. Ferrier had done his best, without much success, to "cheer her up."

Though they soon became more intimate than they had ever been, Agnes Barlow never told Ferrier what it was that had turned her from a happy, unquestioning child into a miserable woman; but, of course, he knew.

And gradually Frank had come to know that she knew, and, manlike, he spent less and less time in his now uncomfortable home. He would go away in the morning an hour earlier than usual, and then, under pretext of business keeping him late at the office, he would come back after having dined, doubtless with "Janey," in town.

Soon Agnes began to draw a terrible comparison between these two men — between the husband who had had all her heart, and the friend whom she now acknowledged to herself — for hypocrisy had fallen away from her — had lived only for her, and for the hours they were able to spend together, during two long years, and yet who had never told her of his love, or tried to disturb her trust in her husband.

Yes, Gerald Ferrier was all that was noble — Frank Barlow all that was ignoble. So she told herself with trembling lips a dozen times a day, taking fierce comfort in the knowledge that Ferrier was noble. But she was destined even to lose that comfort; for one day, a week before the day when we find her walking to Summerfield station, Ferrier's nobility, or what poor Agnes took to be such, suddenly broke down.

They had been walking together in Battersea Park, and, after one of those long silences which bespeak great intimacy between a man and a woman, he had asked her if she would come back to his rooms — for tea.

She had shaken her head, smilingly. And then he had turned on her with a torrent of impetuous, burning words — words of ardent love, of anguished longing, of eager pleading. And Agnes had been frightened, fascinated, allured.

And that had not been all.

More quietly he had gone on to speak as if the code of morality in which his friend had been bred, and which had hitherto so entirely satisfied her, was, after all, nothing but a narrow counsel of perfection, suited for those who were sheltered and happy, wretchedly inadequate to meet the needs of the greater number of human beings who were, as Agnes now was, humiliated and miserable. His words found an echo in her sore heart. But she had not let him see how they moved her. On the contrary, she had rebuked him, and for the first time they had quarreled.

"If you ever speak to me like that again," she had said coldly, "I will not come again."

And again he had turned on her violently: "I think you had better not come again! I am but a man, after all!"

They parted enemies; but the same night Ferrier wrote Agnes a very piteous letter, asking pardon on his knees for having spoken as he had done. And his letter moved her to the heart. Her own deep misery — never for one moment did she forget Frank and Frank's treachery — made her understand the torment that Ferrier was going through.

For the first time she realized what so few of her kind ever realize, that it is a mean thing to take everything and give nothing in exchange. And gradually, as the long, solitary hours wore themselves away, Agnes came to believe that if she did what she now knew Ferrier desired her to do — if, casting the past behind her, she started a new life with him — she would not only be doing a generous thing by the man who had loved her silently and faithfully for so long, but she would also be punishing Frank, hurting him in his honor, as he had hurt her in hers.

And then the stars that fight in their courses for those lovers who are also poets fought for Ferrier.

The day after they had quarreled and he had written her his piteous letter of remorse, Gerald Ferrier fell ill. But he was not too ill to write. And after he had been ill four days, and when Agnes was feeling very, very miserable, he wrote and told her of a wonderful vision which had been vouchsafed to him.

In this vision Ferrier had seen Agnes knocking at the narrow front door of the lonely flat where he lived solitary; and through the door had slipped in his angelic visitant, by her mere presence bringing him peace, health, and the happiness he was schooling himself to believe must never come to him through her.

The post which brought her the letter in which Ferrier told his vision brought also to Agnes Barlow a little registered parcel containing a pearl-and-diamond pendant from Frank.

For a few moments the two lay on her knee. Then she took up the jewel and looked at it curiously. Was it with such a thing as this that her husband thought to purchase her forgiveness?

If Ferrier's letter had never been written, if Frank's gift had never been despatched, it may be doubted whether Agnes would have done what we now find her doing — hastening, that is, on her way to make Ferrier's dream come true.

At last she reached the little suburban station.

One of her father's many kindnesses to her each year was the gift of a season ticket to town; but to-day some queer instinct made her buy a ticket at the booking-office instead.

The booking-clerk peered out at her, surprised; then made up his mind that pretty Mrs. Barlow — she wore to-day a curiously thick veil — had a friend with her. But his long, ruminative stare made her shrink and flush. Was it possible that what she was about to do was written on her face?

The train steamed into the station, and she got into an empty carriage, for the rush that goes on each evening Londonward from the suburbs had not yet begun.

And then, to her surprise, she found that it was the thought of her husband, not of the man to whom she was going to give herself, that filled her sore heart.

Old memories — memories connected with Frank, his love for her, her love for him — became insistent. She lived again, while tears forced themselves through her closed eyes, through the culminating moment of her marriage day — the start for the honeymoon, a start made amid a crowd of laughing, cheering friends, from the little station she had just left.

How infinitely kind and tender Frank had been to her!

And then Agnes reminded herself, with tightening breath, that men like Frank Barlow are always kind to women.

In her ears there sounded Ferrier's quick, hoarsely uttered words: "D'you think I should ever have said a word to you of all this — if you had gone on being happy? D'you think I'd ask you to come to me if I thought you had any chance of being happy with him — now?" And she knew in her heart that he had spoken truly. Ferrier would never have tried to disturb her happiness with Frank; he had never so tried during those two years when they had seen so much of each other, and when Agnes had known, deep down in her heart, that he loved her, though it had suited her conscience to pretend that his feeling was only "friendship."

The train glided into the fog-laden London station, and very slowly Agnes Barlow stepped down out of the railway carriage. She felt oppressed by the fact that she was alone. During the last few weeks Ferrier had always been standing on the platform waiting to greet her, eager to hurry her into a cab — to a picture gallery, to a concert, or of late, oftenest of all, to one of those green oases which the great town still leaves her lovers.

But now Ferrier was not here; he was ill, solitary in the lonely rooms which he called home.

Agnes Barlow hurried out of the station.

Hammer, hammer, hammer went what she supposed was her heart. It was a curious, to Agnes a new sensation, bred of the fear that she would meet some acquaintance to whom she would have to explain her presence in town. She could not help being glad that the fog was of that dense, stifling quality which makes every one intent on his own business rather than on that of his neighbors.

Then something happened which scared Agnes. She was walking, now very slowly, out of the station, when a tall man came up to her. He took off his hat and peered insolently into her face.

"I think I've had the pleasure of meeting you before," he said.

She stared at him with a great, unreasonable fear gripping her heart. No doubt this was some business acquaintance of Frank's. "I — I don't think so," she faltered.

"Oh, yes," he said. "Don't you remember, two years ago at the Pirola in Regent Street? I don't *think* I can be wrong."

And then Agnes understood. "You are making a mistake," she said breathlessly, and quickened her steps.

The man looked after her with a leering smile, but he made no further attempt to molest her.

She was trembling — shaken with fear, disgust, and terror. It was odd, but such a thing had never happened to pretty Agnes Barlow before. She was not often alone in London; she had never been there alone on such a foggy evening, an evening which invited such approaches as those she had just repulsed.

She touched a respectable-looking woman on the arm. "Can you tell me the way to Flood Street, Chelsea?" she asked, her voice faltering.

"Why, yes, Miss. It's a good step from here, but you can't mistake it. You've only got to go straight along, and then ask again after you've been walking about twenty minutes. You can't mistake it." And she hurried on, while Agnes tried to keep in step behind her, for the slight adventure outside the station became retrospectively terrifying.

At last the broad thoroughfare narrowed to a point where four streets converged. Agnes glanced fearfully this way and that. Which of those shadowy masculine figures hurrying past, intent on their business, would direct her rightly? Within the last half hour Agnes had grown horribly afraid of men.

And then, with more relief than the fact warranted, across the narrow roadway she saw emerge, between two parting waves of fog, the shrouded figure of a woman leaning against a dead wall.

Agnes crossed the street.

And then suddenly there broke from her, twice repeated, a low, involuntary cry of dread.

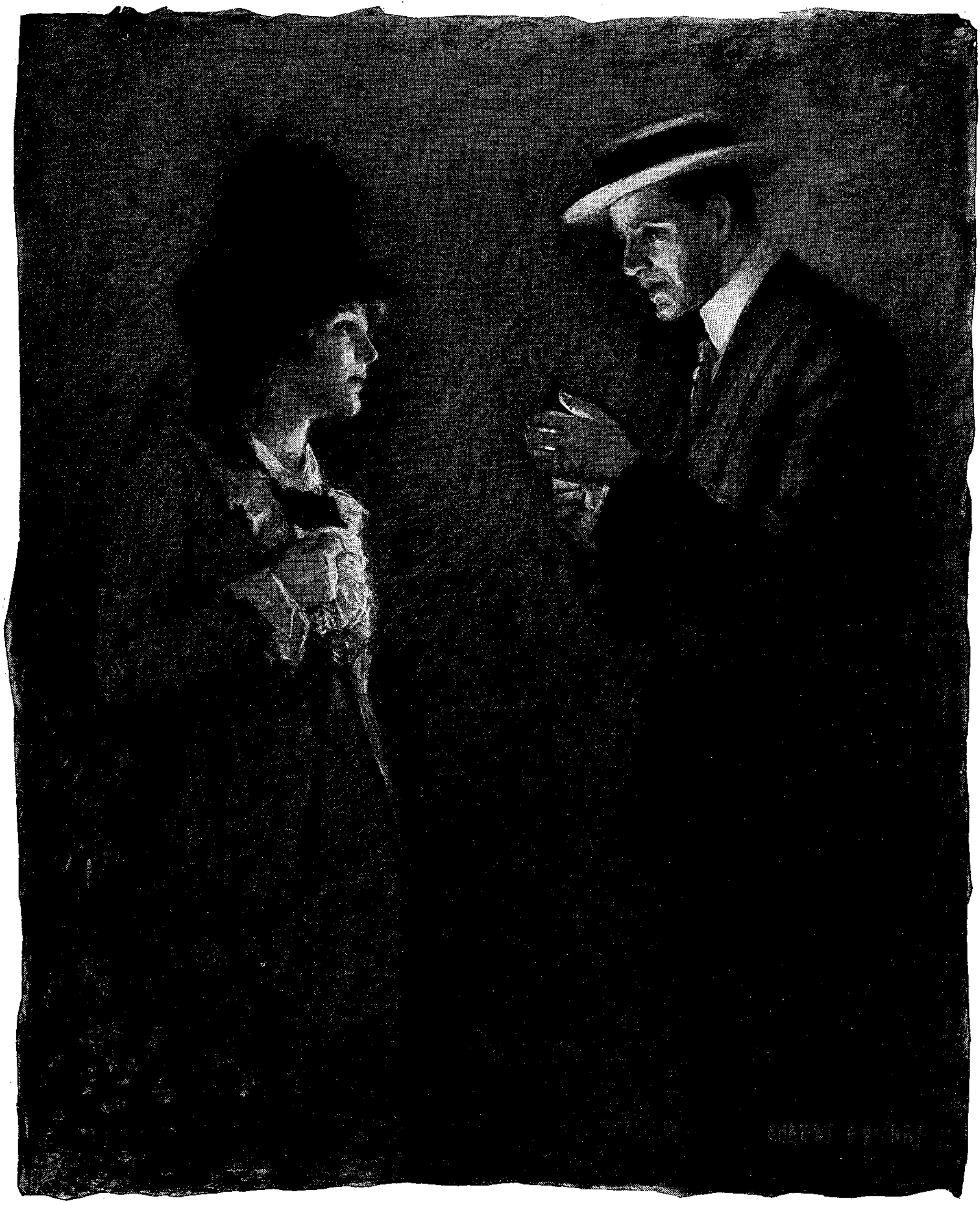
"Teresa!" she cried. And then, again, "Teresa!" For in the shrouded figure before her she had recognized, with a thrill of incredulous terror, the form and lineaments of Teresa Maldo.

But there came no answering cry; and Agnes gave a long, gasping, involuntary sigh of relief as she realized that what had seemed to be her dead friend's dark, glowing face was the face of a little child — a black-haired beggar child, with large startled eyes wide open on a living world.

The tall woman whose statuesque figure had so strangely recalled Teresa's supple, powerful form was holding up the child, propping it on the wall behind her.

Still shaking with the chill terror induced by the vision she now believed she had not seen, Agnes went closer still to the melancholy group.

Even now she longed to hear the woman



"'OH, MY DARLING,' HE WHISPERED, 'I KNOW I'VE BEEN A BEAST—BUT I'VE NEVER LEFT OFF LOVING YOU'"

speak. "Can you tell me the way to Flood Street?" she asked.

The woman looked at her fixedly. "No, that I can't," she said listlessly. "I'm a stranger here." And then, with a passionate energy which startled Agnes, "For God's sake, give me something, lady, to help me to get home! I've walked all the way from Essex; it's taken me — oh! so long, with the child — though we've had a lift here and a lift there — and I haven't a penny left. I came to find my husband; but he's lost himself — on purpose!"

A week before, Agnes Barlow would have shaken her head and passed on. She had always held the theory, carefully inculcated by her careful parents, that it is wrong to give money to beggars in the street.

But in a flash she recalled a sermon of Father Ferguson's in which the preacher had advanced the astounding theory that it were better to give to nine impostors than to refuse the one just man; nay, more, he had reminded his hearers of the old legend that Christ sometimes comes in the guise of a beggar to the wealthy.

She took five shillings out of her purse, and put it, not in the woman's hand, but in that of the little child.

"Thank you," said the woman dully. "May God bless you!" That was all. And Agnes went on, vaguely comforted.

And now at last she reached the quiet, unbeautiful Chelsea Street where Ferrier lived. The fog had drifted toward the river, and in the lamplight Agnes Barlow was not long in finding a large open door above which was inscribed: "The Thomas More Studios."

Agnes walked timorously through into the square, empty, gas-lit hall, and looked round her with distaste. The place struck her as very ugly and forlorn, utterly lacking in what she had always taken to be the amenities of flat life — an obsequious porter, a lift, electric lights.

How strange of Ferrier to have told her that he lived in a building that was beautiful!

Springing in bold and simple curves, rose a wrought-iron staircase, filling up the center of the narrow, towerlike building. Agnes knew that Ferrier lived somewhere near the top.

She waited a moment at the foot of the staircase. She was gathering up her strength, throwing behind her everything that had meant life, happiness, and — what had been so much to such a woman as herself — personal repute.

But, even so, Agnes did not falter in her purpose. She was still possessed, driven onward by a passion of jealous misery.

But, though her spirit was willing, ay, and more than willing, for revenge, her flesh was weak; and as she began slowly walking up the steps she started nervously at the grotesque shapes cast by her own shadow, and at the muffled sounds of her own footfalls. Half way up the high building the gas-jets burned low, and Agnes felt aggrieved. What a mean, stupid economy on the part of the owners of this strange, unnatural dwelling-place!

How dreadful it would be if she were to meet any one she knew — any one belonging to what she was already unconsciously teaching herself to call her old, happy life! As if in cruel answer to her fear, a door opened, and an old man, clad in a big shabby fur coat and broad-brimmed hat, came out.

Agnes' heart gave a bound in her bosom. Yes; this was what she had somehow thought would happen. In the half light she took the old man to be an eccentric acquaintance of her father's.

"Mr. Willis?" she whispered hoarsely.

"My name's not Willis," he said gruffly, as he passed her on his way down, and her heart became stilled. How could she have been so foolish as to take that disagreeable old man for kindly-natured Mr. Willis?

She was now very near the top. Only a story and a half more, and she would be there. Her steps were flagging, but a strange kind of peace had fallen on her. In a few moments she would be safe, forever, in Ferrier's arms. How strange and unreal the notion seemed!

And then — and then, as if fashioned by some potent incantation from the vaporous fog outside, a tall gray figure rose out of nothingness, and stood, barring the way, on the steel floor of the landing above her.

Agnes clutched the iron railing, too oppressed rather than too frightened to speak. Out in the fog-laden street she had involuntarily called out the other's name. "Teresa?" she had cried. "Teresa?" But this time no word broke from her lips, for if she spoke she feared that the other would answer.

Teresa Maldo's love, the sisterly love of which she had been so little worthy, had broken down the gateless barrier which stretches its dense length between the living and the dead. What she, the living woman, had not known to do for Teresa, the dead woman was able to do for her — for now Agnes measured, in a flash, the depth of the gulf into which she had been about to throw herself.

She stared up with fearful, fascinated eyes at the immobile figure swathed in gray, cere-like garments, and her gaze traveled stealthily up to the white, passionless face, drained of all expression save that of watchful concern and understanding tenderness.

Suddenly she turned round, and then with swift, terror-hastened steps she leaped down the iron stairway to the deserted hall, and so out into the street.

Into the fog she plunged, not even sparing a moment to look back and up to the dimly lighted window behind which poor Ferrier stood, as a softer, a truer-natured woman might have done. Violently she put all thought of her lover from her, and as she hurried along with tightened breath, the instinct of self-preservation alone possessing her, she became more and more absorbed in measuring the fathomless depth of the pit in which she would by now have been engulfed had it not been for Teresa Maldo.

Her one wish now was to get home — to get home — to get home — before Frank got back.

But the fulfilment of that wish was denied her — for as Agnes Barlow walked, crying softly as she went, in the misty darkness along the road that led from Summerfield station to the gate of the Haven, there fell on her ear the rhythmical tramp of well-shod feet. She shrank near to the hedge, in no mood to greet or to accept greeting from a neighbor.

The walker was now close to her. He struck a match. "Agnes?" It was Frank Barlow's voice — shamed, eager, questioning. "Is that you? I thought — I hoped you would come home by this train."

And as she gave no immediate answer, as he missed — God alone knew with what relief — the prim, cold accents to which his wife had accustomed him of late, he hurried forward and took her masterfully into his arms. "Oh, my darling," he whispered huskily, "I know I've been a beast — but I've never left off loving you — and I can't stand your coldness, Agnes; it's driving me to the devil! Forgive me, my pure angel——"

And Frank Barlow's pure angel did forgive him, and with a spontaneity and generous forgetfulness which he will ever remember. Nay, more; Agnes — and this touched her husband deeply — even gave up her pleasant acquaintance with that writing fellow, Ferrier, because Ferrier, through no fault of his, was associated, in both their minds, with the terrible time both would give so much to wipe out, obliterate from their otherwise cloudless married life.

THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN

BY

JEFFERY FARNOL

AUTHOR OF "THE BROAD HIGHWAY"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HERMAN PFEIFER

What happened in preceding instalments.—Barnabas Barty, son of the retired ex-champion pugilist of England, being left a fortune of £700,000, decides to go to London and become a gentleman. He sets forth on foot; while crossing through a wood, he encounters Lady Cleone Meredith, who has been thrown from her horse, and goes to her assistance. In doing so, he quarrels with Sir Mortimer Carnaby, the King's favourite. At the inn where he stops with his friend the Viscount Horatio Bellasis, Barnabas learns that Sir Mortimer Carnaby is plotting to marry Lady Cleone for her fortune and that she has consented to meet his go-between, a profligate courtier named Chichester, in a lonely spot at sundown. Barnabas arrives at the rendezvous first, forces Chichester to retire, and, when Lady Cleone comes, offers to escort her back to her guardian. Lady Cleone, resenting his interference, strikes him with her riding-whip.

Barnabas and the Lady Cleone Listen to a Prophecy

UPON the quiet stole a rustle of leaves — a whisper that came and went intermittently, that grew louder and louder, and so — was gone again; but in place of this was another sound — a musical jingle like the chime of fairy bells, very far and faint and sweet. All at once Barnabas knew that his companion's fear of him was gone — swallowed up — forgotten in the terror of the unknown. He heard a slow-drawn, quivering sigh, and then, pale in the dimness, her hand came out to him, crept down his arm, and, finding his hand, hid itself in his warm clasp; and her hand was marvellous cold, and her fingers stirred and trembled in his. Came again a rustling in the leaves, but louder now, and drawing nearer and ever nearer. And ever, as it came, Barnabas felt her closer — until her shoulder touched his, until the fragrance of her breath fanned his cheek, until the warmth of her soft body thrilled through him — until, loud and sudden in the silence, a voice rose, a rich, deep voice:

"'Now is the witching hour when graveyards yawn'—the witching hour—aha! Oh, poor, pale ghost, I know thee by thy night-black hair and sad, sweet eyes, I know thee. Alas, so young—and dead! while I?—alas, so old and much alive! Yet I, too, must die some day—soon, soon, beloved shadow. Now, harkee. Oysters! Oysters!—and away we go!

"Many a knight and lady fair
My oysters fine would try;
They are the finest oysters, sir,
That ever you did buy.
Oysters! who'll buy my oysters, oh!"

The bushes rustled again, and into the dimness leapt a tall, dark figure, that sang and capered among the shadows. In that moment the moon shone out again, shone down upon a strange, wild creature, bare-headed and bare of foot. A very tall man he was, with curling grey hair that hung low upon his shoulders, and upon his coat were countless buttons of all makes and kinds, that winked and glittered in the moonlight, and jingled faintly when he moved. For a moment he stood motionless and staring, then, laying one hand to the gleaming buttons on his bosom, bowed with an easy, courtly grace.

"Who are you?" demanded Barnabas.

"Billy, sir—poor Billy; Sir William, perhaps, but mum for that; the moon knows, but can not tell—then why should I?"

"And what do you want—here?"

"To sing, sir, for you and the lady, if you will. I sing for high folk and low folk; but most of all I sing for Her!"

"Who is She?"

"One who died many years ago. Folk told her I was dead—killed at sea—and her heart broke. I put off the shoes from my feet, and shall go barefoot to my grave. Folk tell me that poor Billy's mad—well, perhaps he is, but he sees and hears more than folk think—the Wise Ones tell him things. They tell me you came here to-night—oh, Youth, oh, Impulse!—hasting, hasting to save a wanton from herself."

"Fool!" exclaimed Barnabas, turning upon the speaker in swift anger; for my lady's hand had freed itself from his clasp, and she had drawn away from him.

"Fool?" repeated the man, shaking his head. "Nay, sir. I am but mad, folk tell me; yet the Wise Ones make me their confidant. They tell me that she—this proud lady—is here to aid an unworthy brother, who sent a rogue instead."

"Brother!" exclaimed Barnabas, with a sudden light in his eyes.

"Who else, sir?" demands my lady, very cold and proud again all at once.

"But," stammered Barnabas, "but—but I thought——"

"Evil of me!" says she.

"No; that is—I—I—forgive me!"

"Sir, there are some things no woman can forgive; you dared to think——"

"Of the rogue who 'came instead,'" said Barnabas.

"Ah!—the rogue?"

"His name is Chichester," said Barnabas.

"Chichester!" she repeated incredulously. "Chichester?"

"A tall, slender, dark man, with a scar on his cheek," added Barnabas.

"Do you mean he was here—here to meet me—alone?"

Now at this she seemed to shrink into herself, and all at once sank down, crouching upon her knees, and hid her face from the moon.

"My lady!"

"Oh!" she sighed. "Oh! that he should have come to this!"

"My Lady Cleone!" said Barnabas, and touched her very gently.

"And you—you!" she cried, shuddering away from him. "You thought I— Oh, shame! Ah, don't touch me!"

But Barnabas stooped and caught her hands, and sank upon his knees; and thus, as they knelt together in the moonlight, he drew her so that she must needs let him see her face.

"My lady," said he reverently, "my thought of you is this: that, if such great honour may be mine, I will marry you—to-night."

But hereupon, with her two hands still prisoned in his, and with the tears yet thick upon her lashes, she threw back her head and laughed. Thereat Barnabas frowned blackly and dropped her hands—then caught her suddenly in his long arms and held her close.

"By God!" he exclaimed, "I'd kiss you, Cleone, on that scornful, laughing mouth; only—I love you—and this is a solitude. Come away!"

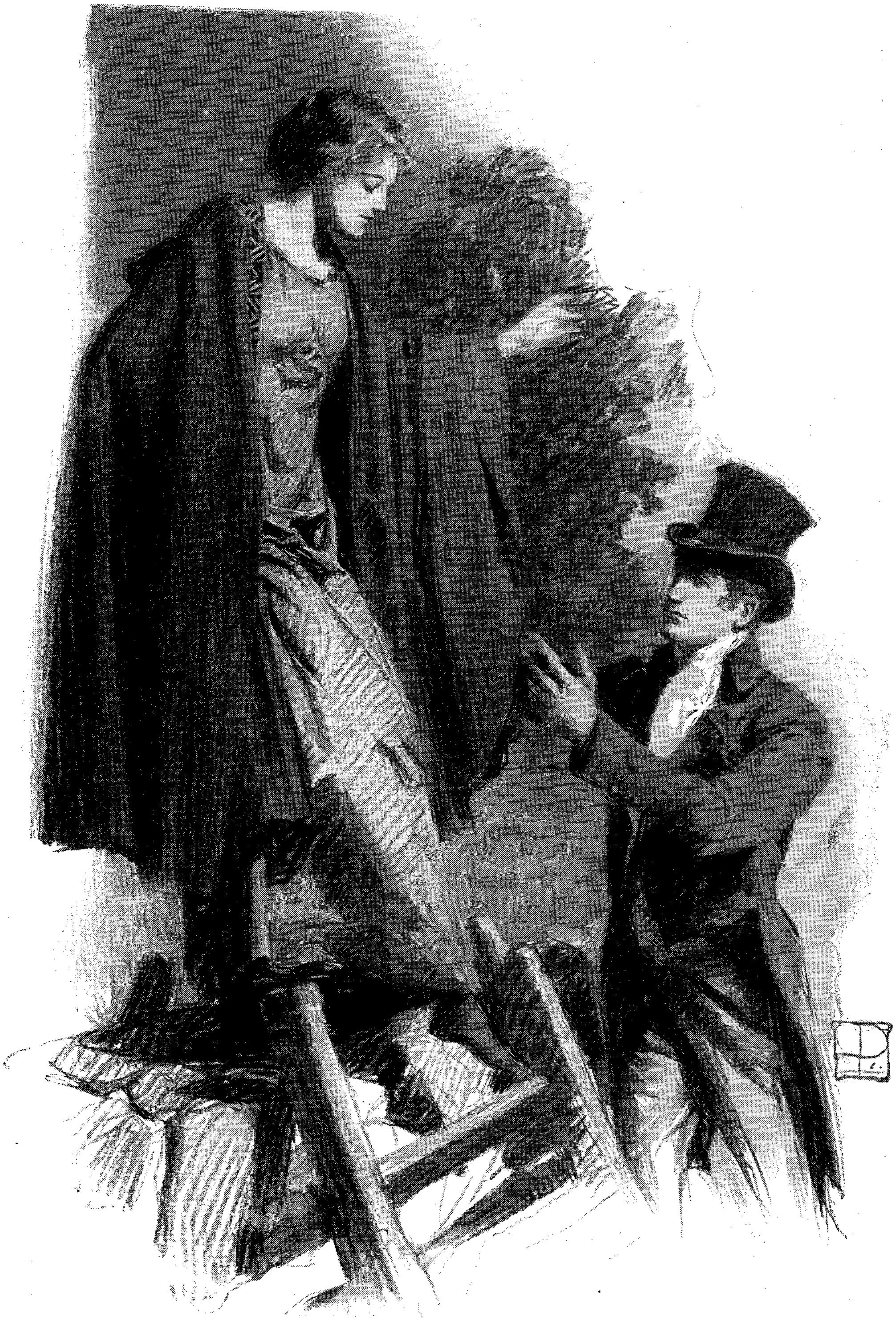
"A solitude," she repeated, "yes. And he sent me here to meet a beast—a satyr; and now—you! You drove away the other brute—oh, I can't struggle—you are too strong—and nothing matters now!" And so she sighed and closed her eyes.

Then, gazing down upon her rich, warm beauty, Barnabas trembled, and loosed her, and sprang to his feet.

"I think," said he, turning away to pick up his cudgel, "I think—we had—better—go."

But my lady remained crouched upon her knees, gazing up at him under her wet lashes. "You didn't—kiss me!" she said wonderingly.

"You were so—helpless!" said Barnabas.



"WHEN, HAVING VAULTED OVER, BARNABAS WOULD HAVE HELPED HER, CLEONE LOOKED OVER AND PAST HIM, AND DESCENDED UNAIDED, PROUD AND SUPREMELY DISDAINFUL"

"And I honour you because it was — your brother!"

"Ah! but you doubted me first!"

"Forgive me," said Barnabas humbly.

"Why should I?"

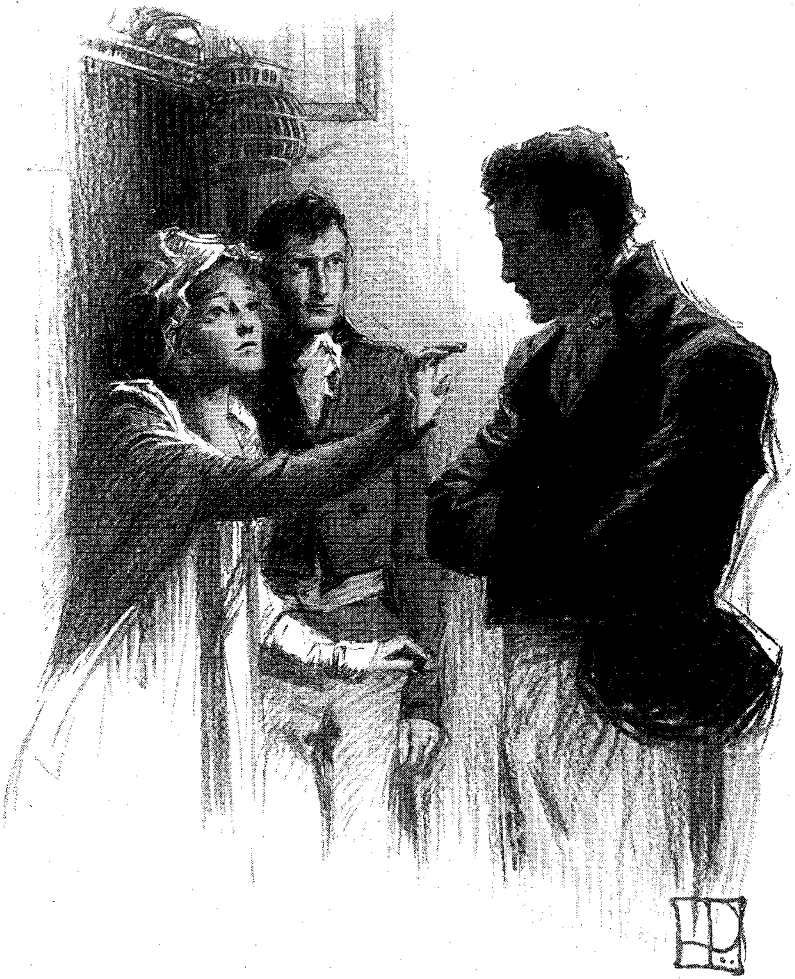
"Because I love you."

Again she was silent, while one slender hand plucked nervously at the grass.

"Are you so sure of me?" she enquired at last.

"No — only of myself."

"Ah! You mean to — force a promise from me — here?"



"'GO BACK!' SHE WHISPERED. 'YOU MUST — OH, YOU MUST! HE HAS KILLED MEN BEFORE NOW'"

"Love!" she exclaimed. "So soon! You have seen me only once."

"Yes," he nodded; "it is therefore to be expected that I shall worship you also — in due season."

Barnabas stood leaning upon his stick, a tall, impassive figure; his voice was low, yet it thrilled in her ears; and there was that in his steadfast eyes before which her own wavered and fell; yet, even so, from the shadow of her hood she must needs question him further:

"When?"

"When you are — my — wife."

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because it is night, and you are solitary; I would not have you fear me again. But I shall come to you two months from now, one day when the sun is in the sky and friends are within call. I shall come and ask you then."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then I shall wait."

"I think I shall — refuse you."

"Indeed, I fear it is very likely."

"Why?"

"Because of my unworthiness; and therefore I would not have you kneel while I stand."

"And the grass is very damp," she sighed.

So Barnabas stepped forward with hand outstretched to aid her; but, as he did so, the wandering singer was between them, looking from one to the other with his keen, bright eyes.

"Stay!" said he. "The Wise Ones have told me that she who kneels before you now — coveted for her beauty, besought for her money — shall kneel thus in the time to come; and one, even I, poor Billy, shall stand betwixt you and join your hands thus, and bid you go forth trusting in each other's love and strength. Hush! The Wise Ones grow impatient for my song; I hear them calling from the trees, and must begone. But harkee! they have told me your name. Barnabas? Aha! that minds me — at Barnaby Bright we shall meet again, all three of us, under an orbed moon — at Barnaby Bright:

> "Oh, Barnaby Bright, Barnaby Bright,
> The sun's awake, and shines all night!"

And so he bowed, turned, and danced away.

And now my lady sighed and rose to her feet, and, looking at Barnabas, sighed again — though, indeed, a very soft little sigh this time. As for Barnabas, he yet stood wondering and looking after the strange creature, and pondering his wild words. Thus my lady, unobserved, viewed him at her leisure — noted the dark, close-curled hair, the full, well-opened, brilliant eye, the dominating jaw, the sensitive nostrils, the tender curve of the firm, strong mouth. And she had called him a ploughman — a runaway footman — and had even —! She could see the mark upon his cheek — how red it glowed! Did it hurt much, she wondered?

"Mad, of course; yes, a madman, poor fellow!" said Barnabas thoughtfully.

"And he said your name is Barnabas."

"Why, to be sure, so he did," said Barnabas, rubbing his chin as one at a loss — "which is strange, for I never saw or heard of him before."

"So, then, your name is — Barnabas?"

"Yes. Barnabas Bar — Beverley."

"Beverley?"

"Yes, Beverley. But — we must go."

"First tell me how you learned — my name?"

"From the Viscount — Viscount Devenden."

"Then you know the Viscount?"

"I do; we also know each other as rivals."

"Rivals? For what?"

"Yourself."

"For me? Sir, sir, what did you tell him?"

"That I should probably marry you some day."

"You told him — that?"

"I did. I thought it but honourable, seeing he is my friend."

"Your friend! Since when, sir?"

"Since about ten o'clock this morning."

"Sir, are you not a very precipitate person?"

"I begin to think I am — and my name is Barnabas."

"Since ten o'clock this morning! Then you knew — me first?"

"By about an hour."

Swiftly she turned away, yet not before he had seen the betraying dimple in her cheek; and so they came to the edge of the clearing.

Now, as he stooped to open a way for her among the brambles, she must needs behold again the glowing mark upon his cheek, and her glance fell and her lips grew very pitiful.

"I fear — I — does your cheek pain you very much — Mr. Beverley?"

"Thank you, no — and my name is Barnabas."

"I did not mean to — to ——"

"No, no — the fault was mine; I fear I frightened you — and, indeed, the pain is quite gone," he stammered, holding aside the brambles for her passage. Yet she stood where she was, and her face was hidden in her hood. At last she spoke, and her voice was very low:

"Quite gone, sir?"

"Quite gone — and my name ——"

"I'm very glad — Barnabas."

Four words only, be it noted; yet on the face of Barnabas was a light that was not of the moon as they entered the dim woodland together.

CHAPTER XXI

In Which Barnabas Undertakes a Mission

THEIR progress through the wood was slow, by reason of the undergrowth; yet Barnabas noticed that, where the way permitted, she hurried on at speed, and, moreover, that she was very silent and kept her face turned from him.

"Are you afraid of these woods?" he asked.

"No."

"Of me?"

"No."

"Then — I fear you are angry again."

"I think Barnab — your name — is hateful!"

"Strange!" said Barnabas. "I was just thinking how musical it was, as you say it."

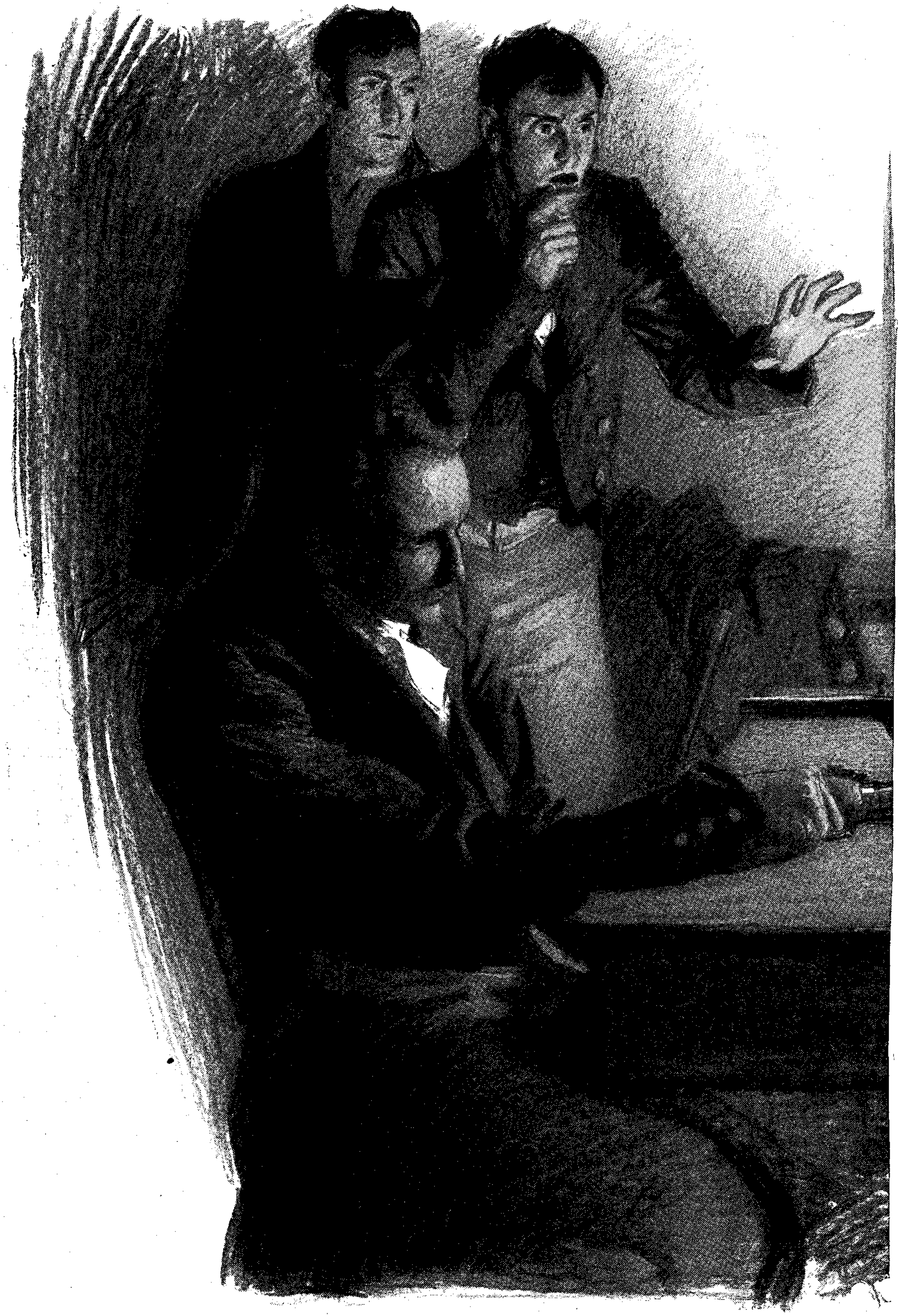
"Pray how did you know," she demanded, "that I was to be at Oakshott's Barn to-night?"

"From my valet."

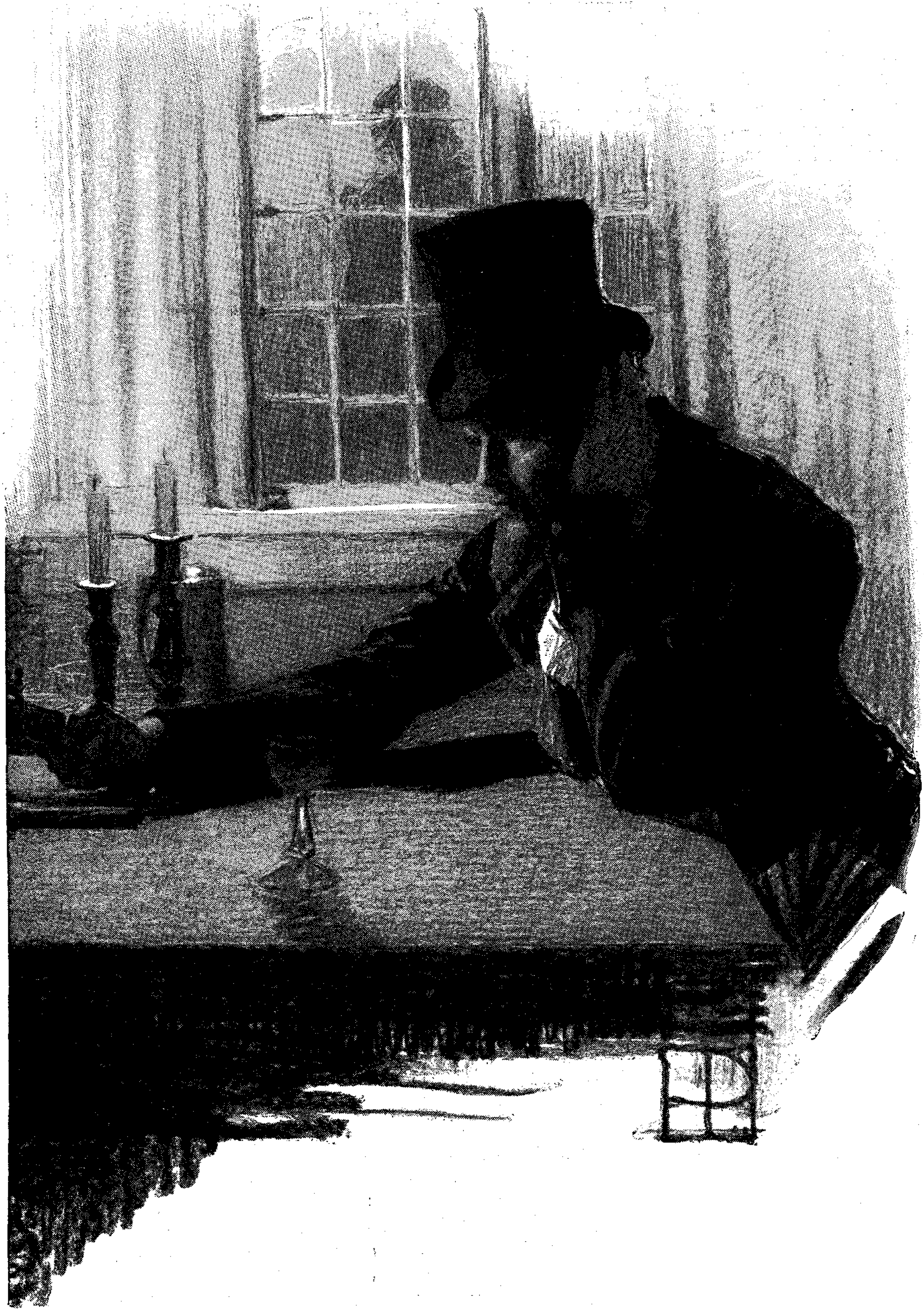
"But how did — your valet — know?"

"He was the man who brought you the letter — from Mr. Chichester."

"It was written by my — brother, sir."



"'BUT THIS IS MURDER!' CRIED DALTON. . . . 'SIR,' SAID BARNABAS, 'I AM NO DUELLIST, AS I EARNESTLY ENDEAVOUR TO TAKE



TOLD YOU, AND THIS EQUALIZES OUR CHANCES. FOR IF I AM TO DIE TO-NIGHT, I SHALL MOST MR. CHICHESTER WITH ME'"

"He was the man who gave you your brother's letter in Annesley Wood."

"Yes — I remember — in the wood."

"Where I found you lying quite unconscious."

"Where you found me — yes."

"Lying — quite unconscious."

"Yes," she answered, beginning to hasten her steps again. "And where you left me without telling me your name — or even asking mine."

"For which I blamed myself — afterwards," said Barnabas. "I came back to try and find you."

"Really?" said she. "Did you, indeed, sir?"

"But I was too late, and feared I had lost you."

"Why, that reminds me — I lost my handkerchief."

"Oh!" said Barnabas, staring up at the moon.

"Yes; I was — hoping — that you had seen it, perhaps?"

"On a bramble-bush," said Barnabas.

"Then — you did find it, sir? Where is it?"

"In my pocket."

"Then why couldn't you say so before?"

"Because I wished to — keep it there."

"Please give it to me!"

"Why?"

"Because no man shall have my favours to wear until he has — my promise also."

"Then, since I have the one, give me the other."

"Mr. Beverley, you will please return my handkerchief." And, stopping all at once, she held out her hand imperiously.

Barnabas sighed and perforce gave the handkerchief into her keeping. And now it was she who smiled up at the moon. After they had gone some way in silence, he spoke:

"Have you met — Sir Mortimer Carnaby — often?" he enquired.

"Yes," she answered; then, seeing his scowling look, added: "oh, very often indeed, sir!"

"Ha!" said frowning Barnabas. "Is he one of the many who have — told you their love?"

"Yes."

"Hum!" said Barnabas, and strode in gloomy silence. Seeing which, she smiled in the shadow of her hood, and grew angry all at once.

"And pray why not, sir?" she demanded haughtily. "He is, at least, a gentleman, and a friend of the Prince ——"

"And has an excellent eye for horse-flesh — and women," added Barnabas.

Now, when he said this, she merely looked at him once, and thereafter forgot all about him; whereby Barnabas gradually perceived that his offence was great, and would have made humble atonement, yet found her blind and deaf. But they reached an uncommonly high stile — an awkward stile at any time, more especially at night. Nevertheless she faced it resolutely, even though Barnabas had ceased to exist. When, therefore, having vaulted over, he would have helped her, she looked over him and past him, and descended unaided, confident of herself, proud and supremely disdainful; and then — because of her pride, or her disdain, or her long cloak, or all three — she slipped, and, to save herself, must needs catch at Barnabas, and yield herself to his arm; so, for a moment, she lay in his embrace, felt his clasp tight about her, felt his breath upon her cheek. Then he had set her down and was eying her anxiously.

"Your foot — is it hurt?" he enquired.

"Thank you, no," she answered, and, turning, hurried on faster than ever.

"Dear lady," said he very gently, "if I offended you a while ago, forgive me — Cleone."

"Indeed," said she, looking away from him, "it would seem I must be always forgiving you — Mr. Beverley."

"Why, surely it is a woman's privilege to forgive, Cleone — and my name ——"

"Oh, I forgive you!" she sighed.

"Yet you still walk very fast."

"It must be nearly nine o'clock."

"I suppose so," said Barnabas, "and you will, naturally, be anxious to reach home again."

"Home!" she said bitterly. "I have no home."

"But ——"

"I live in a gaol — a prison! Yes, a hateful prison — guarded by a one-legged gaoler and governed by a one-armed tyrant — yes, a tyrant!"

"Can you possibly mean old Jerry and the Captain?"

Here my lady paused in her quick walk, and even condescended to look at Barnabas.

"Do you happen to know them too, sir?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps you don't believe me when I say he is a tyrant?"

"Why, I'm afraid — not," he admitted.

"I'm nineteen!" said she, standing very erect.

"I should have judged you a little older," said Barnabas.

"So I am — in mind and — experience. Yet here I live, prisoned in a dreary old house, with nothing to see but trees, and toads, and cows, and cabbages; and I'm watched over and tended from morning till night, and am the subject of more councils of war than Buonaparte's army ever was."

"What do you mean by councils of war?"

"Oh! Whenever I do anything my tyrant disapproves of, he retires to what he calls the 'roundhouse,' summons the Bo'sun, and they argue and talk over me as though I were a hostile fleet; and they march up and down, forming plans of attack and defence, till I burst in on them; and then — and then — Oh, there are many kinds of tyrants, and he is one. And so to-night I ran away to meet —" She stopped suddenly, her head drooped, and Barnabas saw her white hands clench.

"Your brother," said he.

"Yes, my — brother." But her voice faltered, and she went on through the wood very slowly now. And so at last they came out of the shadows into the soft, clear radiance of the moon, and Barnabas saw that she was weeping; and she, because she could no longer hide her grief, turned and laid a pleading hand upon his arm.

"Pray think of him as kindly as you can," she sighed; "you see — he is only a boy — my brother!"

"So young?" said Barnabas.

"Just twenty; but younger than his age — much younger. You see," she went on hastily, "he went to London a boy, and — and he thought Mr. Chichester was his friend, and he lost much money at play, and — somehow put himself in Mr. Chichester's power. He is my half-brother really, but I — love him so, and I've tried to take care of him. I would have you think of him as generously as you can."

"Yes," said Barnabas, "yes." But now she stopped again, so that he must needs stop too, and when she spoke, her soft voice thrilled with a new intensity:

"Will you do more? You are going to London. Will you seek him out — will you try to — save him from himself? Will you promise me to do this — will you?"

Now, seeing the passionate entreaty in her eyes, feeling it in the twitching fingers upon his arm, Barnabas suddenly laid his own above that slender hand and took it into his warm clasp.

"My lady," said he solemnly, "I will." As he spoke he stooped, until she felt his lips warm upon her palm, a long, silent pressure; and yet her hand was not withdrawn.

"But it will be difficult," she sighed, as they went on together. "Ronald is very headstrong and proud; it will be very difficult!"

"No matter," said Barnabas.

"And — dangerous, perhaps."

"No matter for that, either," said Barnabas.

"Does it seem strange that I should ask so much of you?"

"The most natural thing in the world," said Barnabas.

"But you are a stranger — almost!"

"But I — love you, Cleone."

After this there fell a silence between them; and so, having crossed the moonlit meadow, they came to a tall hedge beyond whose shadow the road led away, white under the moon. Close by, the ways divided, and here stood a weather-beaten finger-post. Beneath this hedge they stopped, and neither looked at the other.

"Sir," said she softly, "we part here; my home lies yonder. Do you start for London — soon?"

"To-night," nodded Barnabas.

"Sir," said she, after a pause, "I would thank you, if I could, for — for all that you have done for me."

"No, no!" said Barnabas hastily.

"Words are poor things, I know, but how else may I show my gratitude?" And now it was Barnabas who was silent; but at last:

"There is — a way," said Barnabas.

"How — what way?"

"You might — kiss me — once, Cleone."

Here she must needs steal a swift look at him.

"I only ask," he continued heavily, "for what I might have — taken."

"But didn't!" she added, with lips and eyes grown suddenly tender.

"No," sighed Barnabas. "Nor shall I ever — until you will it so."

Now, as she gazed at him she saw again the mark upon his cheek, and looking sighed; indeed, it was the veriest ghost of a sigh, yet Barnabas heard and straightway forgot all things save her warm beauty, the red allurement of her mouth and the witchery of her drooping lashes; therefore he reached out his hands to her, and she saw that they were trembling.

"Cleone," he murmured, "oh, Cleone!"

But even while he spoke she recoiled from his touch, for, plain and clear, came the sound of footsteps on the road near by. Sighing, Barnabas turned thitherwards, and beheld advancing towards them one who paused, now and then, to look about him as though at a loss, and then hurried on again. A very desolate figure he looked, quaintly pathetic because of his grey hair, and the empty sleeve that flapped helplessly to and fro with the hurry of his going. Being come to the finger-post, he paused to look wistfully on all sides, and Barnabas could see that his face was drawn and haggard. With a sudden hopeless gesture, he leaned his arm against the battered sign-post and hid his face there.

"Oh, my dear!" he cried in a strangled voice, "why did you leave me? Oh, my lass!"

Then all at once came a rustle of parting leaves, the flutter of flying draperies, and Cleone had fled to that drooping, disconsolate figure, had wreathed her protecting arms about it; and so, all moans and sobs and little tender cries, had drawn her tyrant's head down upon her gentle bosom and clasped it there.

CHAPTER XXII

In Which the Reader is Introduced to an Ancient Finger-Post

"WHY, Cleone!" exclaimed the Captain, and folded his solitary arm about her. "My dear, dear lass!"

"No!" she cried. "I'm a heartless savage — an ungrateful wretch! I am, I am! And I hate myself!" And here, forthwith, she stamped her foot at herself.

"No, no, you're not — I say no! You didn't mean to break my heart. You've come back to me, thank God!"

"Dear," she sighed, brushing away her tears with the cuff of his empty sleeve, "dear, I'm a cat — yes, a spiteful cat, and I must scratch sometimes, but ah! if you knew how I hated myself — after! And I know you'll go and forgive me again; and that's what makes it so hard to bear."

"Forgive you, Clo'— aye, to be sure! You've come back to me, you see, and you didn't mean to leave me solitary and ——"

"Ah, but I did — I did! And that's why I am a wretch! and a cat! and a savage! I meant to run away and leave you for ever and ever!"

"The house would be very — dark without you, Cleone."

"Dear, hold me tighter — now listen! There are times when I hate the house, and the country, and — yes, even you. And at such times I grow afraid of myself — hold me tighter! At such times I long for London — and — and — ah, but you do love me, don't you?"

"Love you — my own lass!" The Captain's voice was very low, yet eloquent with yearning tenderness; but even so his quick ear had caught a rustle in the hedge, and his sharp eye had seen Barnabas standing in the shadow. "Who's that?" he demanded sharply.

"Why, indeed," says my lady, "I had forgotten him; 'tis a friend — of yours, I think. Pray come out, Mr. Beverley."

"Beverley!" exclaimed the Captain. "Now, sink me! what's all this? Come out, sir, I say; come out and show yourself!"

So Barnabas stepped out from the hedge, and, uncovering his head, bowed low:

"Your very humble obedient servant, sir."

"Ha? By Thor and Odin! So it's you again, is it, sir? Pray what brings you still so far from the Fashionable World? What d'ye want, sir — eh, sir?"

"Briefly, sir," answered Barnabas, "your ward."

"Eh — what — what?" cried the Captain.

"Sir," returned Barnabas, "since you are the Lady Cleone's lawful guardian, it is but right to tell you that I hope to marry her some day."

"Marry!" exclaimed the Captain. "Marry my — damme, sir! but you're cool — I say cool and devilish impudent — and — and — oh, gad, Cleone!"

"My dear," said she, smiling and stroking her tyrant's shaven cheek, "why distress ourselves? We can always refuse him, can't we?"

"Aye, to be sure — so we can," nodded the Captain. "But oh! sink me — I say, sink and scuttle me — the audacity of it! I say, he's a cool, impudent, audacious fellow!"

"Yes, dear; indeed, I think he's all that," said my lady, nodding her head at Barnabas very decidedly; "and I forgot to tell you that, beside all this, he is the — gentleman who — saved me from — my folly to-night, and brought me back to you."

"Eh? eh?" cried the Captain, staring.

"Yes, dear; and this is he also who —" But here she drew down her tyrant's grey head and whispered three words in his ear. Whatever she said, it affected the Captain mightily, for his frown changed suddenly into his youthful smile, and, reaching out impulsively, he grasped Barnabas by the hand.

"Sir," said he, "you must come in and sup with us — my house is near by. Good English beef and ale, sir."

Barnabas hesitated and glanced toward Cleone. But her face was hidden in the shadow of her hood; wherefore his look presently wandered to the finger-post near by, upon whose battered sign he read the words:

TO HAWKHURST — TO LONDON

"Sir," said he, "I would, most gratefully, but that I start for London — at once." Yet, while he spoke, he frowned blackly at the finger-post, as though it had been his worst enemy.

"London!" exclaimed the Captain. "So you are still bound for the Fashionable World?"

"Yes," sighed Barnabas; "but I ——"

"Pish, sir — I say, fiddle-de-dee!"

"I have lately undertaken a mission. This mission is important and I must begone." And here again Barnabas sighed.

Then my lady turned and looked at Barnabas, and, though she uttered no word, her eyes were eloquent; so that the heart of Barnabas was uplifted.

"Why, then, so be it, young sir," said the Captain. "It remains only to thank you,— which I do most heartily,— and to bid you good-bye."

"Until we meet again, Captain."

"Eh — what, sir? Meet when?"

"In two months' time," answered Barnabas.

"Eh?" exclaimed the Captain. "What's all this?"

"In two months' time, sir, I shall return to ask Cleone to be my wife," Barnabas explained.

"And," said my lady, smiling at the Captain's perplexity, "we shall be glad to see him — sha'n't we, dear? And shall, of course, refuse him — sha'n't we, dear?"

"Refuse him? Yes — no — egad! I don't know," said the Captain, running his fingers through his hair."

"Good-bye, sir!" says my lady, very seriously, and gave him her hand. "Good-bye."

"Till 'Barnaby Bright,'" said Barnabas.

At this she smiled, a little tremulously.

"May heaven prosper you in your — mission," said she, and turned away.

"Young sir," said the Captain, "always remember my name is Chumley,— John Chumley, plain and unvarnished,— and, whether we refuse you or not, John Chumley will ever be ready to take you by the hand. Farewell, sir!"

So tyrant and captive turned away and went down the by-road together, and his solitary arm was close about her. But Barnabas stood there until a bend in the road hid them; then he, too, sighed and turned away. Yet he had gone only a little distance when he heard a voice calling him, and, swinging round, he saw Cleone standing under the finger-post.

"I wanted to give you — this," said she, as he came striding back; and she held out a folded paper. "It is his — my brother's — letter. Take it with you; it will serve to show you what a boy he is, and will tell you where to find him."

So Barnabas took the letter and thrust it into his pocket. Yet she stood before him, and now once again their glances avoided each other.

"I also wanted to — ask you — about your cheek," said she at last.

"Yes?" said Barnabas.

"You are quite sure it doesn't — pain you, Mr. Bev ——"

"Must I remind you that my name ——"

"Are you quite sure — Barnabas?"

"Quite sure — yes, oh, yes!" he stammered.

"Because it — glows very red!" she sighed, though indeed she still kept her gaze averted. "So will you please — stoop your head a little?"

Wonderingly Barnabas obeyed, and even as he did so she leaned swiftly towards him, and for an instant her soft, warm mouth rested upon his cheek. But before he could stay her she was off and away, and her flying feet had borne her out of sight. Then Barnabas sighed and would have followed; but the ancient finger-post barred his way with its two arms pointing:

TO HAWKHURST — TO LONDON

So, obeying the directing finger, he set off Londonwards.

CHAPTER XXIII

How Barnabas Saved His Life — Because He was Afraid

On went Barnabas, swift of foot and light of heart, walking through a world of Romance, and with his eyes turned up to the luminous heaven. Yet it was neither of the moon nor the stars nor the wonder thereof that he was thinking, but only of the witchery of a woman's eyes and the thrill of a woman's lips upon his cheek. It was of this that he was thinking as he turned into that narrow by-lane where stood the Spotted Cow. As he advanced he espied some one standing in the shadow of the great tree, who, as he came nearer, stepped out into the moonlight; and then Barnabas saw that it was none other than his newly engaged valet. As they faced each other, Barnabas observed something else: John Peterby's lips were compressed and in his eye was anxiety, the which had, somehow, got into his voice when he spoke, though his tone was low and modulated:

"Sir, if you are for London to-night we had better start at once; the coach leaves Tenterden within the hour."

"But," says Barnabas, "I have ordered supper here, Peterby."

"Which, under the circumstances, I have ventured to — countermand, sir."

"Oh?" said Barnabas. "Pray, what circumstances?"

"Sir, as I told you, the mail ——"

"John Peterby, speak out. What is troubling you?"

But now, even while Peterby stood hesitating, from the open casement of the inn near at hand came the sound of a laugh — a soft, gentle, sibilant laugh which Barnabas immediately recognized.

"Ah!" said he, clenching his fist, "I think I understand." But, as he turned towards the inn, Peterby interposed.

"Sir," he whispered, "sir, if ever a man meant mischief, he does. He came back an hour ago, and they have been waiting for you ever since."

"They?"

"He and the other."

"What other?"

"Sir, I don't know."

"Is he a very — young man, this other?"

"Yes, sir, he seems so; and they have been drinking together, and — I've heard enough to know that they mean you harm."

But here Master Barnabas smiled with all the arrogance of youth, and shook his head.

"John Peterby," said he, "learn that the first thing I desire in my valet is obedience. Pray, stand out of my way!" So, perforce, Peterby stood aside; yet Barnabas had scarce taken a dozen strides ere Clemency stood before him.

"Go back," she whispered; "go back!"

"Impossible," said Barnabas; "I have a mission to fulfill."

"Go back!" she repeated in the same tense whisper. "You must — oh, you must! I've heard he has killed a man before now ——"

"And yet I must see and speak with his companion."

"No, no — ah! I pray you ——"

"Nay," said Barnabas, "if you will, and if need be, pray for me." So saying, he put her gently aside and entered the inn.

"I tell you, I'll kill him, Dalton," said a soft, deliberate voice.

"Undoubtedly! The light's excellent; but, my dear fellow, why?"

"I object to him — strongly, for one thing, and ——" The voice was hushed suddenly, as Barnabas set wide the door and stepped into the room, with Peterby at his heels.

Mr. Chichester was seated at the table with a glass beside him, but Barnabas looked past him to his companion, who sprawled on the other side of the hearth — a sleepy, sighing gentleman, very high as to collar, very tight as to waist, and most ornate as to waistcoat; young he was certainly, yet with his first glance Barnabas knew instinctively that this could not be the youth he sought. Nevertheless he took off his hat and saluted him.

"Sir," said he, "pray what might your name be?"

Instead of replying, the sleepy gentleman opened his eyes rather wider than was usual, and stared at Barnabas with a growing surprise, then, without changing his lounging attitude, spoke:

"Oh, 'gad, Chichester, is this the — man?"

"Yes."

"But, my dear Chit! Surely you don't propose to — This fellow! Who is he? What is he? Look at his boots — oh, 'gad!"

Hereupon Barnabas resumed his hat, and, advancing, leaned his clenched fists on the table, and from that eminence smiled down at the speaker; that is to say, his lips curled and his teeth gleamed in the candle-light.

"Sir," said he gently, "you will perhaps have the extreme condescension to note that my boots are strong boots, and very serviceable either for walking or for kicking an insolent puppy."

"If I had a whip, now," sighed the gentleman, "if I only had a whip, I'd whip you out of the room. Chichester, pray look at that coat — oh, 'gad!"

But Mr. Chichester had risen, and now, crossing to the door, he locked it, and dropped the key into his pocket.

"As you say, the light is excellent, my dear Dalton," said he, fixing Barnabas with his unwavering stare.

"But, my dear Chit, you never mean to fight the fellow — a — a being who wears such a coat, such boots! Observe that hat! Good 'gad! Take your cane and whip him out — positively, you can not fight this bumpkin."

"None the less, I mean to shoot him — like a cur, Dalton." And Mr. Chichester drew a pistol from the pocket of his driving-coat, and fell to examining flint and priming with a practiced eye. "I should have preferred my regular tools, but I dare say this will do the business well enough. Pray snuff the candles."

Now, as Barnabas listened to the soft, deliberate words, as he noted Mr. Chichester's assured air, his firm hand, his glowing eye and quivering nostrils, a sudden deadly nausea came over him, and he leaned heavier upon the table.

"Sirs," said he, speaking with an effort, "I have never used — a pistol — in my life."

"One could tell as much from his boots!" murmured Mr. Dalton, snuffing the candles.

"You have another pistol, I think, Dalton. Pray lend it to him. We will take opposite corners of the room, and fire when you give the word."

"All quite useless, Chit; he won't fight."

"No," said Barnabas, thrusting his trembling hands into his pockets —"not in a corner!"

Mr. Chichester shrugged his shoulders, sat down, and, leaning back in his chair, stared up at pale-faced Barnabas, tapping the table-edge softly with the barrel of his weapon.

"Not in the corner — I told you so, Chit. Oh, take your cane and whip him out!"

"I mean," said Barnabas, very conscious of the betraying quaver in his voice —"I mean that, as I'm — unused to — shooting, the corner would be — too far."

"Too far? — oh, 'gad!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "What's this?"

"As for pistols, I have one here," continued Barnabas; "and, if we must shoot, we'll do it here — across the table."

"Eh — what? Across the table! But oh, 'gad, Chichester! this is madness!" said Mr. Dalton.

"Most duels are," said Barnabas, and as he spoke he drew from his pocket the pistol he had taken from Mr. Chichester earlier in the evening, and, weapon in hand, sank into a chair, thus facing Mr. Chichester across the table.

"But — but this is murder — positive murder!" cried Mr. Dalton.

"Sir," said Barnabas, "I am no duellist, as I told you, and it seems to me that this equalizes our chances; for I can no more fail of hitting my man at this distance than he of shooting me dead across the width of the room. And, sir, if I am to — die to-night, I shall most earnestly endeavour to take Mr. Chichester with me."

There was a tremour in his voice again as he spoke, but his eye was calm, his brow serene, and his hand steady as he cocked the pistol, and, leaning his elbow upon the table, levelled his weapon within six inches of Mr. Chichester's shirt-frill.

But hereupon Mr. Dalton sprang to his feet with a stifled oath: "I tell you, it's murder — murder!" he exclaimed, and took a quick step towards them.

"Peterby!" said Barnabas.

"Sir?" said Peterby, who had been standing rigid beside the door.

"Take my stick," said Barnabas, holding it out towards him, but keeping his gaze upon Mr. Chichester's narrowed eyes. "It's heavy, you'll find, and should this person presume to interfere, knock him down with it."

"Yes, sir," said Peterby, and took the stick accordingly.

"But — oh, 'gad!" exclaimed Dalton. "I tell you, this can't go on!"

"Indeed, I hope not," said Barnabas, "but it is for Mr. Chichester to decide; I am ready for the count when he is."

But Mr. Chichester sat utterly still, his chin on his breast, staring at Barnabas under his brows, one hand tight clenched about the stock of his weapon on the table before him, the other hanging limply at his side. So for an interval they remained thus, staring into each other's eyes in a stillness so profound that it seemed all four men had ceased breathing. Then Mr. Chichester sighed faintly, dropped his eyes to the muzzle of the weapon so perilously near, glanced back at the pale, set face and unwinking eyes of him who held it, and sighed again.

"Dalton," said he, "pray open the door and order the chaise." And he laid the key upon the table.

"First," said Barnabas, "I will relieve you of that — encumbrance"; and he pointed to the pistol yet gripped in Mr. Chichester's right hand.

Without a word Mr. Chichester rose and, leaving the weapon upon the table, turned and walked to the window, while Mr. Dalton, having unlocked the door, hurried away to the stable-yard and was heard calling for the hostlers.

"Peterby," said Barnabas, "take this thing and throw it into the horse-pond; yet — no, give it to the gentleman who just went out."

"Yes, sir," said Peterby, and, taking up the pistol, he went out, closing the door behind him.

Mr. Chichester still lounged in the window and hummed softly to himself; but as for Barnabas, he sat rigid in his chair, staring blankly at the opposite wall. So the one lounged and hummed, and the other glared stonily before him, until came the grind of wheels and the stamping of hoofs. Then Mr. Chichester took up his hat and cane, and, humming still, crossed to the door and lounged out into the yard. Came a jingle of harness, a sound of voices, the slam of a door, and the chaise rolled away down the lane farther and farther until the rumble of its wheels died away in the distance.

Now presently, as Barnabas sat there, it seemed to him that one spoke a long way off, whereupon, turning, he beheld Clemency.

"You — are not hurt?" she enquired anxiously.

"Hurt?" said Barnabas. "No, Mistress Clemency — not hurt, I thank you."

"I saw it all — through the window; and yet I — don't know why you are alive!"

"I think because I was so very much — afraid!" said Barnabas.

"Sir," said she, with her brown hands clasped together, "was it for — If it was for — my sake that you — quarrelled and ——"

"No," said Barnabas; "it was because of — another." Now, when he said this, Clemency stared at him wide-eyed, and in that moment flushed painfully and turned away, so that Barnabas wondered.

"Good-bye!" said she suddenly, and crossed to the door, but upon the threshold paused. "I — did — pray for you!" she said, over her shoulder.

"Ah!" said Barnabas, rising, "that explains it, perhaps — you prayed for me, and behold, I am alive."

"Good-bye!" she repeated, her face still averted.

"Good-bye!" said Barnabas. "And will you remember me in your prayers — sometimes?"

"My prayers? Why?"

"Because the prayers of a sweet, pure woman may come between man and evil — like a shield."

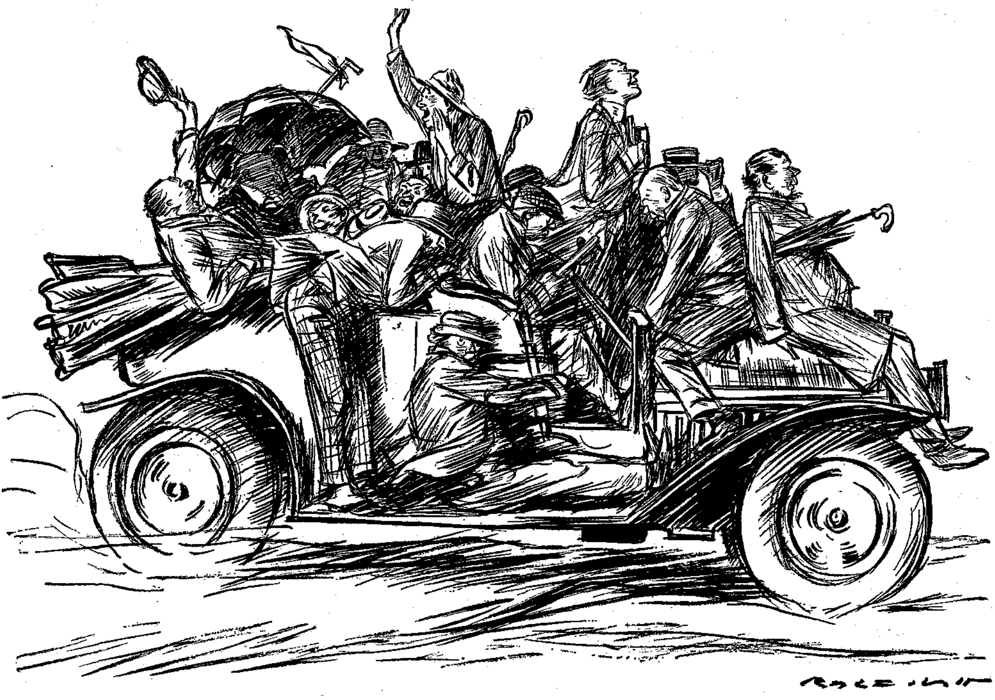
"I will," said she very softly; "oh, I will!" And so, with a swift glance, was gone.

Being come out of the inn, Barnabas met his valet, John Peterby.

"Sir," he enquired, "what now?"

"Now," said Barnabas, "the Tenterden coach, and London."

TO BE CONTINUED



THE MILLIONAIRE OF EPHEMERA CITY

BY

WALLACE IRWIN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY RALEIGH

EPHEMERA CITY sat on the edge of a bluff like a blasted bulb which had withered with the frost and could not answer to the call of Spring. A perfectly good Sorolla seascape tinkled gorgeously among the rocks below and the perpetual calm of southern California bathed the sun-browned hills; yet Ephemera gazed on these benefits with the milky eye of premature old age. She was hope's forgotten hobo, the city that never was, the over-surveyed, over-exploited victim of land-boomers who had looked upon her vainly ere shaking her abundant dust from their feet. Ephemera City was a dead one. Ten years ago a railroad had promised to use her as a seaport terminus. Upon the strength of the rumor, Ephemera had gone into a fever of expectation and broken out violently into corner lots. Surveyors and exploiters had planned out a city to be as great and as fabulous as Atlantis — municipal centers, boulevards to the foot-hills, ocean promenades, free baths for the poor who were destined to infest her teeming slums: all the joys and terrors of metropolitan life were planned for Ephemera City. The farming population paid the bill, the railroad never came, the exploiters disappeared like the morning mist.

So stood Ephemera among her forty weed-grown boulevards, her forty houses huddled in a group, expiring in each other's arms, as it were. Twenty of the houses were inhabited by those too poor or too hopeful to move. The other twenty, tottering, deserted, and skeletonized, gave the appearance of famished wolves already half devoured by the cannibal pack; for it was customary, in Ephemera, to look upon an empty house merely as a firewood-bearing product.

It was late afternoon of a dusty, still, honey-sweet day when the Forlorn Hope came riding into Ephemera. Young Ike McCumber, lolling plumply under the sign, "Hams, Magazines, Groceries, Real Estate & Peach Bloom 5c. Cigar,"— posted for the benefit of passers-by who seldom passed,— was pondering the question of how to make $147 pay the interest on his mortgage as well as taxes on his vast acreage of corner lots. Young Ike was the first to behold the approaching phenomenon on horseback. But as aforesaid phenomenon progressed down Grand Avenue the village uttered a gasp which vied with the Pacific's surf below. Widow Crawford, in the act of committing assault with a deadly weapon upon a red hen, paused in her baleful labor; Rafael Banderilla, last and drunkenest descendant of the Crown Governors, removed his sombrero from his bald brown head and swayed perceptibly; Nelse Battle, attempting to back a mule into the rickety door of Battle Bros. Livery Stable, stopped in the midst of a complicated oath-figure, permitting his long-eared adversary to escape into the mesa; and pretty Goldie Stewart, engaged in sprinkling the only flower-bed in town, turned the watering-can upon her foot in the confusion of the moment.

This disturber of Ephemera's calm was a middle-aged man wearing corduroy coat, riding-breeches and puttees, a cropped mustache, and diamond-flashing eye-glasses, suggestive of the plutocracy. He drew up his sleek bay horse in front of Coog's Hotel, where he remained in the saddle long enough to examine the fly-specked windows and fading sign. Then he dismounted and opened the warped front door.

Now it happened that Mr. H. W. Coog, Proprietor, had gone down to the rocks to fish for pompano, as was his daily custom. So the well-dressed stranger, standing in the narrow sun-bleached hall and calling "Hey!" several times, at last noticed this sign hanging to the newel-post of the stairs:

IF YOU WANT A ROOM
Take No. 15 at Head of Stairs
H. W. Coog, Prop.

The stranger smiled a cynic smile and mounted to room 15.

Ike McCumber, given to adventurous dreams of long duration, sat on the same box, scrutinizing the same ocean, when the equestrian gentleman interrupted his reverie by touching him lightly on the arm.

"Hey?" exclaimed Ike, jumping like an evil conscience.

"Excuse me," said the elegant person; "I see you advertise cigars. Could I get a good one here?"

"You bet your life," exclaimed Ike, rising to the emergency. "We carry the Peach Bloom five-center—the same kind I'm a-smokin' right now."

"I think I'll take a quarter's worth of ginger-snaps," said the stranger evasively.

Ike dipped into a bin of petrified sweets which clicked noisily one against another with a sound peculiar to poker-chips. While the grocer was thus engaged the customer took stock furtively. A few full barrels, several empty ones, some bins labeled "Flour," "Coffee," "Oatmeal," an Eiffel Tower of canned salmon, flanked by assorted tomatoes, peaches, and sardines, in the show-case a fossilized cheese, a stock of shoes, and a round bushel of Peach Bloom 5c. Cigars.

"So *this* is Ephemera City!" said the traveler, seating himself on one of the crates outside and gnawing at a molasses-colored disk.

"That's what she is!" answered Ike.

"Not doing so well as expected, what?" suggested the stranger.

"Well, Mister," said Ike, "seems to me about all Ephemery City needs is capital — and that's about the only thing she hasn't got. There's possibilities in this place. Just look at the climate and the view."

"I see them," responded the stranger, with a perfectly expressionless expression.

"With a few thousand dollars," said Ike, "you could turn this place into a swell re-sort, like Coronado or Capitola. I've always thought it would be a good scheme to paint my grocery and Coog's Hotel and Battle Brothers' Livery Stable a bright sky-blue, so they would be seen for miles out to sea. We could build an auto road from the county pike — only thirty miles or so; then we could make a board walk and bath-houses and a bathin' beach ——"

"How the devil could you make a bathing beach out of *that?*" inquired the quiet individual, pointing to the crag-strewn surf below.

"Maybe the U. S. Government would undertake to blast it out."

"They might — they weren't afraid to build the Panama Canal," observed the stranger, biting a ginger-snap to conceal a grin.

Ike reflectively plucked a spear of dry grass from the crop which grew over the sidewalk.

"Whom do you regard as the land-baron of this municipality?" asked the man with the puttees.

"The which?"

"Who owns the most real estate in these city limits?"

"I guess I do," said Ike. "I got enough buildin' propity here to put me in the Astor class if the railroad should ever come. When pa died he left me a quarter-section part-planted with dried-up lemon trees. From the propity I got from ma I own the strip along the shore-front — what hasn't went for taxes. Coog and Banderilla and Pratt and Pinkus and the Portugees owned a lot, too, in them days; but they didn't hold on, the way I did. Y' see, I'm the father of this town, as y' might say."

"A pretty young father."

"I was twenty at the time the boom came. I had some ideas about Greater Ephemery. Folks around here couldn't see me at first; they're a kind o' short-sighted lot. I said to 'em, 'We don't want to make the same mistake the fellers who first built Chicago and N'York made. They didn't have any imagination. They laid out the town so there wasn't any room to grow up to.'"

"*You* didn't make that mistake," said the stranger.

"Guess not"— pointing pridefully to a vista of greasewood receding to the foot-hills. "There's City Heights and the Western Addition out there. I own most o' that. McCumber Park's over there. That's mine"— pointing to a desert stretch to the north. "I got seventy-five choice residence sites along the strip we planned to call Lakeside Drive."

"Where's the lake?"

"It's there," said Ike, indicating a distant dusty hollow. "All it needs is water, that's all."

"It's restful, restful," mused the equestrian, gazing out to sea, where a little white sail flapped indolently in the blue calm. He cleared his throat.

"How much would you take for your interest in Ephemera real estate — the whole thing, hands down?"

Earth seemed suddenly to recede from Ike's feet. He was about to say, "One thousand dollars," when the stranger cut in:

"Take this as confidential, please. I'll give you fifteen thousand for the job lot, sight unseen, no questions asked, on the spot."

Ike gulped. The Fiend of Frenzied Finance, ever his familiar spirit, tweaked him by the ear, asking, "Why?"

"Why?" echoed the grocer.

"I like the view," said the worldly person.

"Gimme time to think ——"

"I leave at ten o'clock to-morrow morning," said the other sharply. "I've given you the best offer you'll ever get for this property, and I've got to know before I leave."

His magnificent leather puttees bore him away in the general direction of Coog's Hotel.

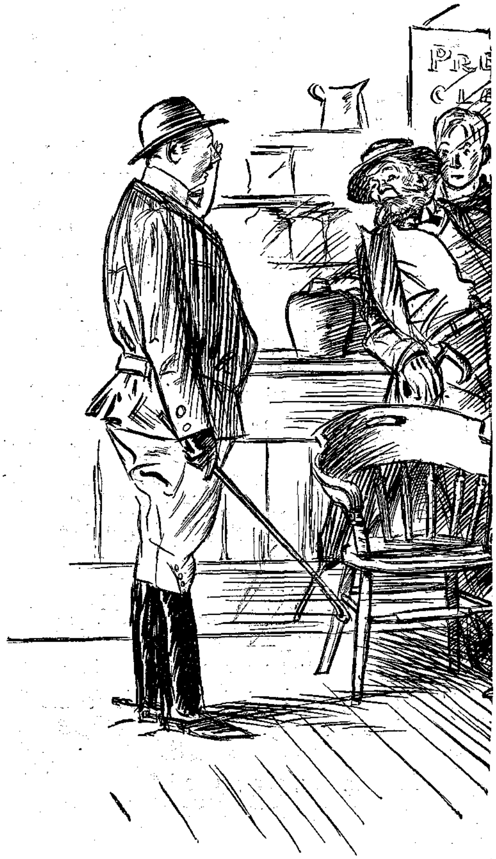
"Railroad comin'!" whispered the familiar Fiend in McCumber's ear.

Ike "batched" alone out back of his store. His usual menu consisted of canned salmon, not because he preferred this variety of fish, but because he had an over-supply in stock. But to-night he permitted himself the luxury of a can of peaches and a box of lemon wafers. As he ate he went over a bundle of deeds, yellow with age. High-sounding tracts of land, wonderful building sites, great parks and boulevards — fifteen thousand seems a paltry sum for dreams like these!

"I don't want that real-estate dude to play me for a sucker," he said to himself several times.

At half past seven he put on his store suit and derby hat. It was the hour to pay court to Goldie Stewart.

It's a great thing for a young man slightly under thirty, with an offer of fifteen thousand dollars under his hat, to have a girl like Goldie within easy proposing distance. Ike had been worrying considerably concerning the devotions of a lemon-rancher named Trasker, whose horse



"'THE WAY I FIGURE,'

had been tied frequently of late to the gatepost of the ancient structure where the cross-grained old invalid, Jeremiah Stewart, sojourned with his daughter. Ephemera had smiled a superior smile when the pair, a year ago, had come to town from the still more hopeless municipality of Utopia Landing. They offered Mr. Coog, as landlord, ten dollars a month for a battered ruin with a sea-view porch. Mr. Coog thought them insane, and Ephemera indorsed his opinion when Miss Goldie appeared one morning in a pair of enormous blue overalls and proceeded to mend the roof and patch the wabbly supports of the veranda. Later, with her pretty face and sun-touched tresses showing above this same workmanlike attire, she had painted the house a neat buff, weeded the yard, filled the walk with clean shore-pebbles, and covered the bareness of the place with nasturtiums, geraniums, and climbing vines. The rough work thus accomplished, she reigned merrily in a walking-skirt of khaki cloth. Mr. Coog showed his appreciation of the improvements in the usual landlordly manner — by attempting to raise the rent — a manoeuver which was promptly countered by Goldie's threatening to move.

There came a sound of hammering as Ike entered the Stewart yard. Old Man Stewart, lean and tragic, sat in his swathing of quilts, gazing grimly out to sea.

"Good evenin', Mr. Stewart!" said Ike.

"Huh!" grunted the old man.

"How d'ye feel to-night?"

"None of your business," answered the invalid, with a glare.

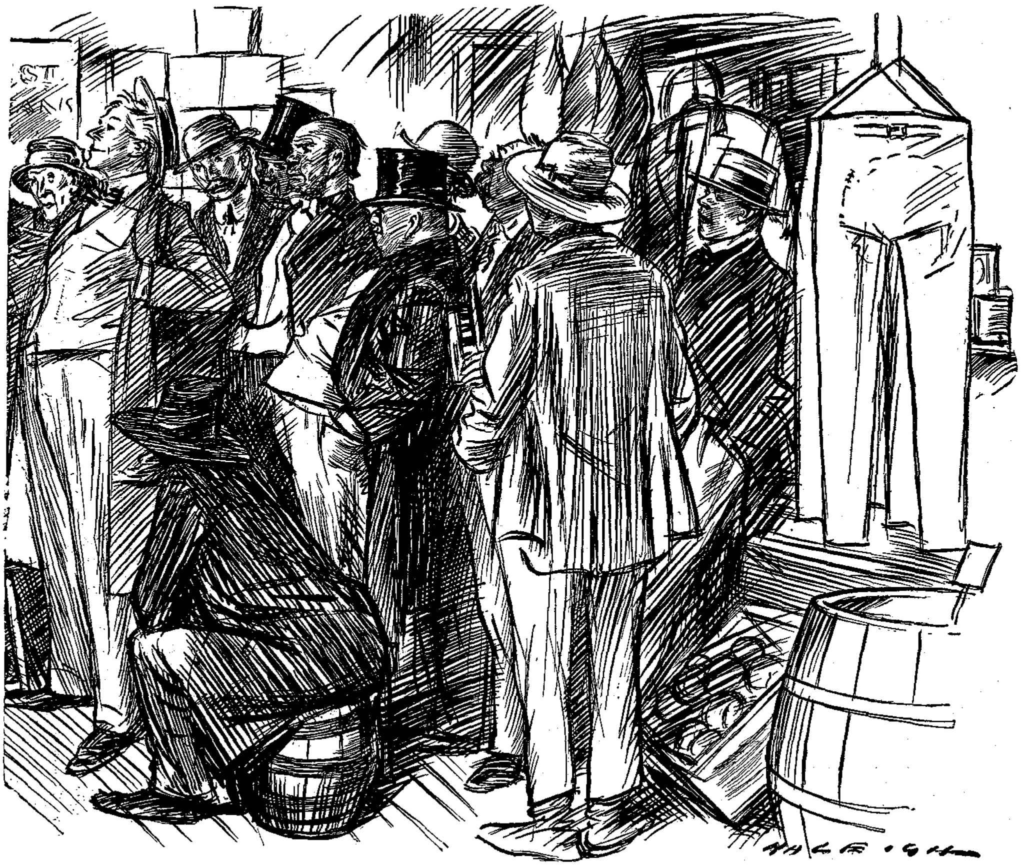
Ike, who was used to this, passed around to the side-yard.

Goldie, a wisp of blond hair falling over her eyes, was setting a strip of chicken-wire around a bed of young lettuce.

"Oh, Ike, hold that old post, will you, while I nail down this end?"

"Chickens?"

"Yes. Widow Crawford's come in here every few minutes if I don't watch 'em. The widow says she can't afford two dollars' worth of chicken-wire to keep 'em home. She gave a peddler seven dollars last week for a string of glass pearls as big as marbles."



HE SAID, 'MY BILL IS ONE MILLION ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY THOUSAND DOLLARS'."

"The old lady needs a sensible daughter — like you," said Ike, bending over her hair.

"Wait a minute," said the girl, with a laugh. "I'll give you a flower for that."

Goldie plucked a fiery nasturtium and pinned it to the lapel of his coat.

His blush was brighter than the posie. "Miss Goldie — some way or other, when you do them things so pretty, I feel like a darned Rube."

"I'm sorry it makes you feel that way," she said, stepping back.

"How's your pa to-day?"

"A little better — but I don't know. It's mental, you know. The doctor sent him here to get away from Utopia, where he's had such bad luck; but he's continually asking to go back."

"*You* don't want to go back, I guess."

"Utopia? No! I can *do* something with this place."

They sat together on a pile of boards under the dwarfed cypress.

"Miss Goldie, if you'd only consider it, there's one thing ——".

She turned the glory of her gaze directly upon him. Ike began to flounder. There must be some book, "Roberts' Rules of Order" or the "Arabian Nights," that would tell him how to do this thing painlessly.

"Miss Goldie, there's somethin'— hold on, I mean, there's an important matter — I want to ask you ——"

"*Oh, Ike!*"

The summons came in a tense, raw tenor from the street not many yards away. Ike scrambled to his feet and beheld, standing in the road, a tall man whose drooping horseshoe mustache, shiny cutaway coat, and roll-brim straw hat gave him the appearance of a rather frivolous undertaker. This was Mr. Coog, clad in the costume which he considered fitting to his worldly position. Mr. Coog beckoned three times, his celluloid cuffs rattling.

"Ike," he whispered, as soon as the younger man joined him in the middle of the road, "you saw that feller stoppin' at my hotel?"

"Yep." He swallowed his emotion manfully.

"His name's Cromwell — D. R. Cromwell!" Mr. Coog said this with vast significance. "I seen the name on a leather case in his room."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"Aw, Ike, you know as well as me! That feller offered me five thousand dollars for my lots!"

"What for?" asked Ike, with assumed stupidity.

"He's been all over town," continued Mr. Coog. "I seen him talkin' to Sam O'Brien and Widow Crawford and the Battle boys. He's on the way to talk with Banderilla now!"

"What's he doin' it for?" whispered Ike, gazing at Coog with a wild surmise.

"I'll show you what for!" said Coog, dramatically drawing a copy of the Los Angeles *Globe* from his pocket and thrusting the following head-line before Ike's eyes:

EPHEMERA CHOSEN

RAILROAD TO BUILD NEW TERMINUS AT COAST CITY

IMPROVEMENTS EXPECTED SOON

"Are you goin' to sell out for five thousand?" asked Ike, after a solemn hush. "It's plain to see that this Cromwell is a real-estate man tryin' to buy ahead of the boom. Prob'ly this town'll be worth ten or twelve millions when the railroad comes in — he thinks he can get it off of us for twenty-five thousand."

"We better stand out," said Coog dubiously.

"You bet we better! He's goin' to come around to my store to-morrow mornin' to get my answer. We'll all of us meet him there with some estimates on the value of our propity, and show him we're as good business men as him."

"I think you're right, boy," said Coog. "With the propity you hold in the Western Addition and Grand Avenue and Lakeside Drive you'll be richer than Senator Stanford. We'll trust in you," added the hotel man, as he wrung the other's hand. "You're the only business genius we got, and the way you're fixed I reckon you're the millionaire of Ephemery City!"

As soon as Coog departed, Ike whistled over the Stewarts' back fence. "Good night, Miss Goldie!" he said softly. But the girl to whom he had almost proposed had gone into the house with her future suspended, as it were, in mid-air.

Ike trotted down the road like an infantry version of Paul Revere, spreading the alarm from door to door. Lights burned late that night in Ephemera. As Ike was entering Widow Crawford's gate he saw the Man of Mystery dismounting in front of Stewart's.

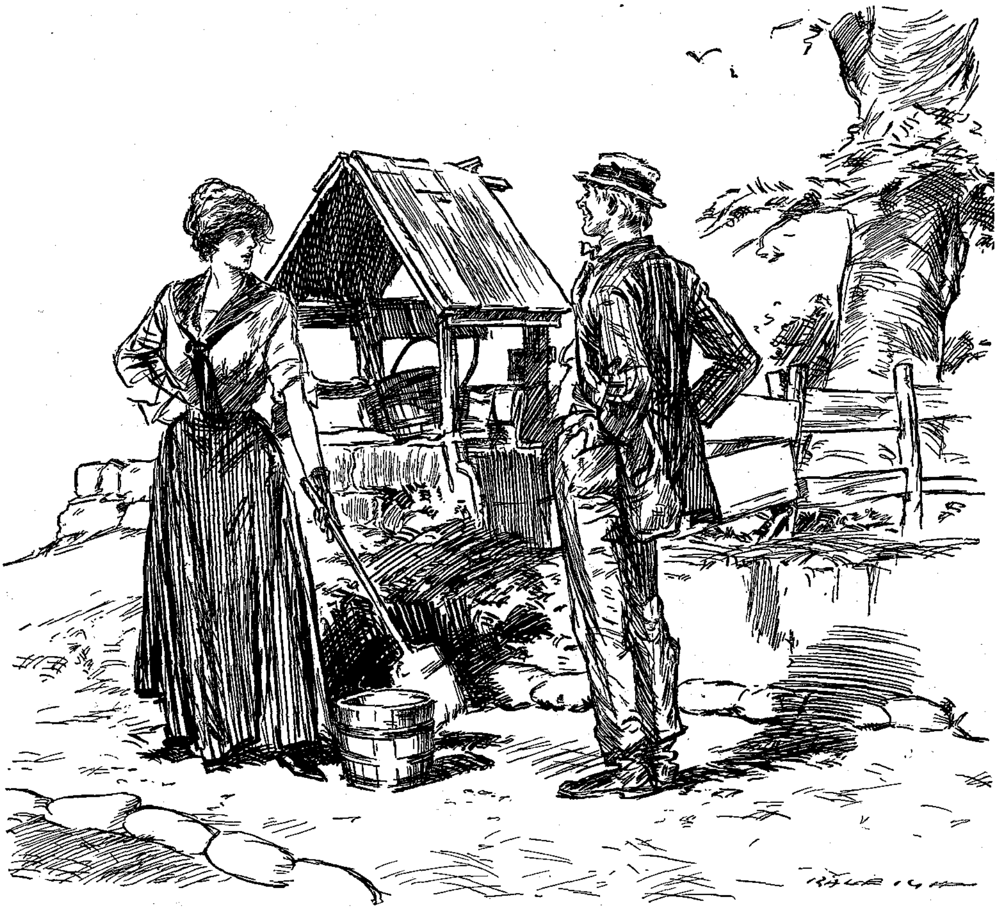
"He'll be fooled if he tries to buy anythin' from them!" he chuckled to himself.

Breathless from exertion, Ike at last repaired to the little room back of his store. But it was not to sleep. Till the gray of dawn he sat opening deeds and adding up row after row of figures, a computation as long and complex as the annual report of the Bank of England.

He was estimating his wealth.

II

The mysterious Mr. Cromwell arose at the hour of nine, clothed himself in equestrian habit, and rattled down the carpetless stairs leading from room 15 to the empty, dusty



"'HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE THE WIFE OF A MILLIONAIRE?'"

dining-room. At the end of an enormously long table whose golden-oak finish was growing gray around the edges, he observed the strip of red table-cloth, the plate, the knife and fork which announced the hospitality of Coog's Hotel. A cloud of flies circled vulture-like, expectant. From the ceiling right above his head a blue-rose-strewn strip of wall-paper sagged like the canopy of a royal pavilion.

Finally the door opened from the kitchen, and Rafael Banderilla, last descendant of the Crown Governors, made entrance. His right hand bore a cup of coffee, pallid with condensed milk and gently spilling as he walked. In his left he held aloft something in the nature of beef, and a platter of that onion-charged mixture known to the trade as "German fried."

"Good morning, Mr. Banderilla," said Mr. Cromwell, turning an apprehensive eye upon the repast.

"Good morn, Señor." Mr. Banderilla wiped his brown aristocratic hands upon his calico apron.

"Been thinking over that thousand I offered you?"

"*Muchas gracias*, Señor! I no can take."

"Can't take? What's the matter?"

"Ten o'clock Señor McCumbero see you; then — I tell you with him."

"Why wait? A thousand dollars is a lot of money, isn't it?"

"De Banderilla family are used to money," said the Don, proudly turning on his carpet-slippers. Cromwell sat chewing beef like a thwarted lion.

At ten o'clock, consulting his flat gold watch dramatically, Mr. Cromwell drew up his sleek steed before McCumber's Grocery, where he dismounted and tied. He rather overdid his air of jaunty unconcern as he entered the door and beheld the entire male population of Ephemera City gathered in a crescent formation and staring at him fixedly: one-eyed Sam O'Brien, the Battle Brothers, five members of the Portuguese colony down the road, Mr. Coog of Coog's, Seth Pratt, who collected ocean curios for a living, Rafael Banderilla, Oscar Pinkus, who carried the mail, and, centrally located in the throng, Mr. Isaac McCumber, wearing his store clothes and derby hat in an every-day manner heretofore unknown in the village.

"Ah, a reception, I see!" said Cromwell, nervously pulling at his riding-gloves.

Ike McCumber stood in the limelight in front of the cigar-counter. He hooked his left thumb in the arm-hole of his waistcoat, an attitude suggestive of financial prowess.

"Well, friend," began Ike, in a tone he had practised overnight, "you thought last night you was goin' to get all the real estate in Ephemera for next to nothin'. I don't blame you for wantin' to buy dirt-cheap, because business is business. But we happen to know what you want o' this land, and we don't propose to sell ourselves out o' house and home for any twenty-five thousand dollars."

"It's all I'll pay," said Cromwell sharply.

"I happen to know how real estate will jump when big improvements begin. Why, man, this very corner my grocery's on is worth three or four times what you offered me for the whole kaboodle."

"Have you any objections to my — er — locating here?"

"No, siree — not a bit. We'd be proud and happy to have rich folks like you improving the town."

"I'm far from being rich folks, but I certainly could improve the town," said Cromwell.

Ike rather admired the slyness with which he concealed his wealth.

"And now, Mr. McCumber, what *do* you value your holdings at this morning?"

McCumber pulled from his store coat a large sheet of wrapping-paper covered with fine calculations.

"I got it all down here," he said. "I calculated it all at about the rates they charged for Los Angeles lots at the time o' the first railroad boom. The way I figure, my bill is about this way: two hundred and fifty residence lots on City Heights averagin' fifteen hundred dollars a lot, $375,000; fifty-one lots on the shore-front at three thousand dollars a lot, $153,000; ninety-five lots in the Western Addition at two thousand dollars, $190,000; McCumber Park and all residence sites convergin' *on* McCumber Park, $463,000."

"I see you haven't charged me up with the parcel you call Lakeside Drive," said the stranger, lighting a cigarette.

"I'm just comin' to that," announced Ike. "Lakeside Drive bein' in a way a disappointment on account of the dry condition of the lake, I am willin' to throw that in at a bargain — say $9,000."

"Have you taken the trouble to add up these little — items?" asked the stranger softly.

"The sum total o' this," said Ike, slightly inflating his chest, "is one million one hundred and ninety thousand dollars."

"And no cents?"

"And no cents."

"I don't think I need waste my time here," said Cromwell, turning slightly pink. "When I came I didn't expect to encounter any such — lofty ideal. I may be back after you've toned down a bit. Meanwhile, here's my card."

"Darwin Cromwell, M.D., Hotel Victoria, Los Angeles," Ike read as the equestrian departed.

"I didn't think that species of paranoia called *cornerlotitis* had penetrated so far!" said Dr. Cromwell to himself, as he galloped away.

"Well, I guess, boys, he'll have to be movin' the Hotel Victoria down here if he wants to talk to *us!*" said the Millionaire of Ephemera City to his townsmen.

"He'll be back all right," said Mr. Coog. "Did y' see how red he got when he found we was on to his game?"

"You bet he'll be back!" said Ike. "We'd 'a' looked like a bunch o' mummies, wouldn't we, sellin' out for a dime to the first bidder. We'll wait till the railroad actually gets here; then we'll unload when the stock's high."

The villagers greeted this speech with tremendous applause, after the manner of villagers when the village plutocrat speaks.

Although no concrete offer of wealth came to Ephemera that day or that week, it was plain to see the gaudy change that had come over Ike McCumber's ego. He was no longer the plaintive, philosophical storekeeper good-naturedly waiting for something to turn up. He was the local millionaire, and he wished to be saluted as such. He knew he was a rich man, and if he for a moment forgot it, he had the exact figures on a strip of wrapping-paper in his inside pocket.

As a side-line to groceries, real estate, and magazines, Ike carried a small stock of haberdashery, dating from the Pleiocene and utterly unsalable in Ephemera. Among these treasures was a pink shirt and a crimson necktie which he had always coveted. He added these now to his wardrobe of leisure, overlooking the fact that the shirt was a size too small and the tie a permanent collar-climber. From stock he also borrowed a pair of patent-leather shoes, elegant and uncomfortable. He took to wearing his Sunday clothes habitually. In ransacking a trunk for his father's gold-filled watch-chain with which to festoon his person, he came across the hundred and forty-seven dollars which he had hoarded toward paying the interest on the mortgage. He slipped this into his pocket.

That day he shook hands a great deal. He was a sort of national hero in the eyes of his neighbors; for, although they counted themselves well-to-do in the imminent bonanza, Ike was wealthy according to the standards of the world. He could go anywhere, do anything.

"Boys," he confided to twelve assembled natives in front of Coog's Hotel, "I'm one o' them kind that only wants a chance. When the railroad knuckles under and we're all of us settled for life, I want you to stand by me like I stood by you ——"

"Anythin' you want, Ike!" said Sid Battle from out the throng.

"Thanks, Sid!" said Ike, again shaking hands. "Maybe y' think I'm ambitious, but I got the money and the talents to do it. I want to be U. S. Senator from California!"

"Viva McCumbero!" shouted Mr. Banderilla, laying his sombrero upon his high Castilian heart.

"Hurrah for Ike!" shouted the male chorus in unison. Again there were handshakes all round.

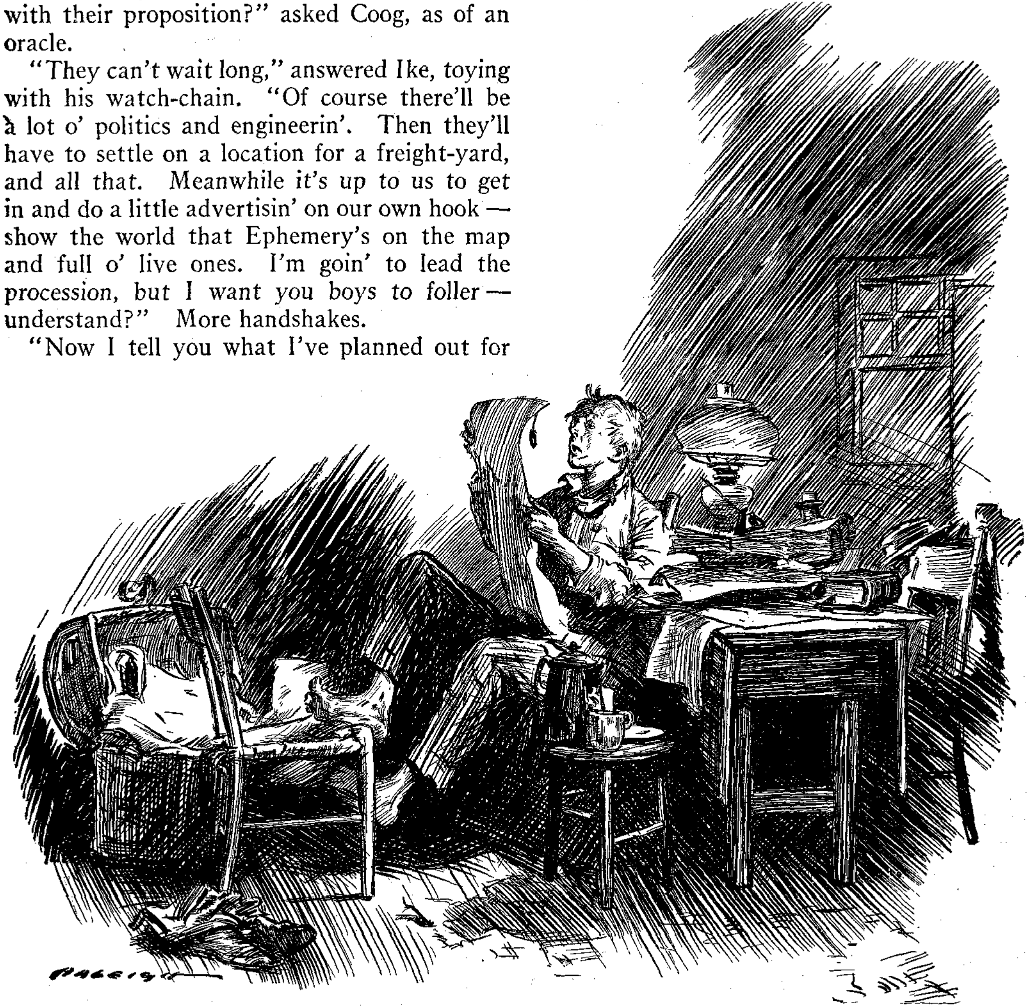
"When d'ye think the railroad'll come over with their proposition?" asked Coog, as of an oracle.

"They can't wait long," answered Ike, toying with his watch-chain. "Of course there'll be a lot o' politics and engineerin'. Then they'll have to settle on a location for a freight-yard, and all that. Meanwhile it's up to us to get in and do a little advertisin' on our own hook — show the world that Ephemery's on the map and full o' live ones. I'm goin' to lead the procession, but I want you boys to foller — understand?" More handshakes.

"Now I tell you what I've planned out for you boys. Charley Suttle, up to Madriz, has got an automobile. I've wrote to Charley offerin' to hire it for a couple o' days. We'll begin by havin' a taste o' high life. It's all on me. To-morrow afternoon I'll give you boys a free joy-ride, to be follered by a free party at my store and——"

"Where you gotta da mon'?" asked Portuguese Frank, with the caution of his race.

"I got the money all right!" said Ike, patting the gold pieces in his pocket. "And this party's only goin' to be a preliminary to the real thing. Next mornin' we'll get into that devil-wagon and ride right up to Los Angeles. I know a real-estate man up there named Rothchild." (Rothchild held the mortgage on Ike's store, but he overlooked this detail.) "Rothchild's a plunger, and he'll be glad and anxious to put Ephemery on the market and



"'I DON'T WANT THAT REAL ESTATE DUDE TO PLAY ME FOR A SUCKER,' HE SAID TO HIMSELF" advance us ten or fifteen thousand toward expenses."

The inhabitants cheered till the gulls rose screaming from the rocky beach.

"And that ain't all," Ike continued. His loving subjects lifted him to a chair as his voice assumed the clarion ring of prophecy. "I tell you, boys, we've vegetated in this hole long enough. With the money Rothchild advances us I'll blow you fellers as you never was blew before. There'll be a special train a-waitin' for us at the depot — French chef to cook the grub, nigger to mix the drinks, steam piana to play the latest pop'lar tunes — then whoosh! off we go to N'York to join the millionaires and show 'em that Ephemery City folks knows how to enjoy their money. Waldorf-Astoria, Folly-Berjerry, Hippodrome, Newport, Flatiron Buildin', Atlantic City — boys, we're goin' to do it like gentlemen!"

A city the size of Ephemera can not well be said to surge, but its people gave as near an imitation of surging as twelve men and thirteen dogs can render under stress of intense excitement.

The addition of a gilt watch-chain and pinkish shirt should have enhanced the lover's charm; but you never can tell. Goldie Stewart, who was whitewashing the stones that bordered the path when Ike McCumber called, turned upon him a face as pale and relentless as the cobbles she decorated. This aspect, added to the fact that he had just seen his rival, the lemon-rancher, riding away, caused Ike to totter slightly on the apex of his pride. And yet, he had come with a purpose. He could now make Goldie an offer that *was* an offer!

"How would you like to be the wife of a millionaire?" he began tactfully.

"You're getting your pretty new shoes all over whitewash," said she, swinging a brush laden with purity's emblem.

"Haven't you heard, Goldie?"

"Yes, I've heard."

"Ain't it great?"

"No," she replied, looking at him for the first time; "I don't think it's great."

"But look! I'm a millionaire. I can offer you everything on God's footstool, if you'll have me."

"You think so?" asked Goldie.

"I know so! We'll have an auto with a front on it like a box-car. You can have a French countess to do your hair every mornin'; you won't need to get up till noon, and when you do you can sit in a pink plush bedroom eatin' oysters, while a golden phonograph plays to you from the works of Caruso. I'll take you to N'York, little girl — in a special train!"

"They *all* seem to want to go to New York in a special train," said Goldie reflectively.

"Won't you have me, girlie? Don't you like me any more?"

"Excuse me, Ike — we couldn't marry. Not now."

"Haven't you got any use for me, Goldie?"

"I did have, Ike. A whole lot. When you came around Saturday night I knew you had something to say, and I'd have answered different then. I always liked you, because you were a strong, natural sort of man-kid. You seemed just like this town, a great hunk of possibilities needing a manager."

"We don't belong to this place any more, you and me."

"I do, dear boy. I made this place a home for me and father. It's only rented, but I sometimes think it's the only real home in Ephemera City. I wouldn't leave it — no, not even in a special train. I love that old blue sea down there, and I hate pink plush boudoirs. I hate oysters, too, and — ugh! — New York!"

"I thought that was the regular way to spend your money."

"I don't want to spend my money; I'd rather spend my life."

"Goldie, I don't want to say anythin' against Utopia Landin', because you came from there — but it's an awful hopeless place, and maybe it's made you sort o' resigned to livin' without money. But Ephemery's different — it's alive, and we got to keep up with the times."

"By going to New York and blowing your money before you've got it," said Goldie, with a melancholy smile. "Ike, how do you know the railroad's coming here?"

"Everybody knows it. Why, the news has been printed in the Los Angeles papers."

"Who offered it?"

"Now, little girl, you mustn't ask questions. I don't think women ought to fool with that stuff. It's depressin' enough as it is to know that I ain't got anything you want."

Goldie whitened the tip of her finger in the wet kalsomine.

"Good-by," said Ike mournfully.

"Please, Ike, talk to me before you do anything about selling," she pleaded, taking his hand. There was a white daub on the big boy's lip as he strode away. It came from a white-kalsomined finger.

Great victories breed riotous rejoicing. The taking of Mafeking nearly wrecked London, and the self-made boom in real estate all but spoiled the battered face of Ephemera City. Shortly after noon, Charley Suttle's blunt red automobile disturbed the sleeping dust of the village and stopped amid diabolical back fires in front of McCumber's Grocery. Charley, as per orders, had brought over two jugs of something, and his face was already illumed with the joy-rider's flush. The male householders of the village, assembled at the counter, took something for the general prosperity of the place, and the ride began. A five-passenger touring-car has been known to carry fifteen adults at a time. As there were no officials of the Automobile Club present to record the feat, you will have to take my word for it when I declare that Charley's patient machine bore nineteen all at once on that fateful afternoon.

After numerous punctures, potations, repairs, toasts, and tributes, the cortège arrived at Wilbur's Road House, at Maduro Fork, where the favorites of fortune continued to order something at Ike McCumber's expense until Rafael Banderilla arose to propose the health of that valiant commander, Admiral Cervera. In the midst of his eulogy, mostly delivered in bad Spanish, he fell back like a wounded matador, and wept on the shoulder of one-eyed Sam O'Brien. After which, consoler and consolee slept peacefully. A member of the Portuguese colony and a Battle brother disappeared down the road singing, "There's no place like home," although obviously pointed in the wrong direction.

Considerably lightened of its burden, the red automobile bumped down the road at the unheard-of pace of ten miles an hour. Henry, fattest of the Battles, sat on two of the Portuguese, who were saying things in their native tongue which might have been either abuse or poetry. Several Ephemerides, clinging to the running-board, engaged in the delights of Comanche college yells. Only Ike McCumber maintained throughout the poise of the man of affairs.

"Often thought o' runnin' one m'self," he confided to Charley, who was at the wheel.

"Teach y' now!" said the obliging chauffeur, unceremoniously turning the wheel over to Ike.

They were now reëntering the main thoroughfare of Ephemera City. Nobody can tell clearly what happened, but there was a deathly crash as the car plowed through the rickety pillars of Coog's Hotel, spun around on its hind quarters, coughed, and stopped with its hood planted upon Mother Earth.

"Busted!" shouted Charley Suttle. "That car's worth a thousand dollars — paid four hundred for it myself."

"It's on me," said Ike lightly. "What's the use o' fussin' over wear and tear on the machine? Come on to the store and we'll have supper."

The feast at the store was conducted on the general principles of an Indian potlatch. There were Lucullan feats performed upon canned salmon, peaches, crackers, and ginger-snaps. The place was foggy with the fumes of Peach Bloom 5c. Cigars, with which the guests filled their pockets as they proposed McCumber of California for the United States Senate. The generous host then proceeded to give away his stock, most of which was accepted by the thrifty members of the Portuguese colony, who made several trips, bearing away shoes, cigars, and canned goods, and even enlisted the services of their wives and children.

It was after one o'clock when the young grocer, singing "Auld Lang Syne" to himself, carefully locked the front door without closing it, and went to bed. The place in front presented the appearance of a treasure-ship after a visit from the gallant crew of Sir Henry Morgan. A pyre of cigar-butts smoldered amid empty cans and broken boxes in the middle of the floor. Tapioca kernels lay like hail amid the wreckage. A show-case was cracked, and a shoe hung by a string from the ceiling-lamp.

"Har! Har! wake up!" The light that made California famous was flooding into the little back room and afflicting Ike's aching eyes.

"Who's there?"

"Coog!" The answer fell doomfully.

Ike groaned and opened the door. Mr. Coog stood in the light, somber as midnight. From his hand dangled a copy of the Los Angeles *Globe*.

"*This* came last night," he growled, "while we was off in that automobile makin' premature darn fools out of ourselves."

The hotel man aimed a long, accusing finger at the head-line which he held an inch from the sufferer's nose:

UTOPIA INSTEAD OF EPHEMERA
RAILROAD MAKES FINAL DECISION
UTOPIA LANDING TO BE SITE
FOR NEW BIG TERMINUS
Harbor Dredging to Begin at Once

"That's the worst!" groaned Ike, holding his painful temples.

"No, it ain't!" said the gloomy Coog. "Charley Suttle's goin' to soak you a thousand for bustin' his auto. Guess I'll have to put in a little bill myself for the damage y' done to the front o' my hotel."

"I ain't got it," wailed Ike.

"That's funny talk for our boy millionaire to be puttin' up. If you'd felt poor like that day before yesterday you wouldn't advised us to hold on to our miserable lots here instid of unloadin' 'em on that man Cromwell, who offered us more'n we'll ever git again. You're a grand little Rockefeller, *you* are!"

"What in Jeerusalem did Doc Cromwell want of Ephemery lots, if the railroad wasn't goin' to build here?" inquired the ex-financier, his head in his arms.

"Ask me nothin'," said Mr. Coog, closing the door from the outside.

Toward sunset Ike rose slowly and put on his second-best suit. He took one look at the devastation in the store, then he went out to the side door and sat on a box, far from the gaze of the crowd. He had squandered his stock, spent his savings, and wrecked Charley Suttle's car. Rothchild would be down on him for his interest in a few days. It was settled. He would lock up, pull his hat over his eyes, and take to the open road forever.

Goldie Stewart was building a new roof to her chicken-coop when he passed, looking neither to right nor left. The *rat-tat-tat* of her hammer ceased.

"Oh, Ike!" Her voice was not loud, but it claimed attention.

"Yes, ma'am!" said Ike, meekly drawing near.

"Pass me up that bundle of shingles, will you?" Her mouth was full of shingle-nails as she reached down for the load. *Rat-tat-tat.* She drove three nails into place.

"Dear boy," she said suddenly, "where are you going?"

"I don't know," said Ike thickly. "Goldie, I'm ruined — busted. The railroad ain't comin' here."

"Yes, I've heard. So you're not going to New York on a special train?"

"If I go, I walk."

"I'm glad, Ike, mighty glad you aren't rich. You had a taste of it last night — how does it feel to-day?"

Ike pulled his hat a little further over his nose.

"The other day, when you spoke of marriage and things, you wanted to go to New York in a private car. I was scared — do you know why?"

"No."

"You see that poor old broken man over there — my father? *He* went to New York and blew himself like a gentleman. Several years ago he made some money in oil — not much, but enough. He'd been a good man up to the time he packed us up and took us East — in a special car. After a few months of 'living like a gentleman,' as he called it, he crept back to Utopia with money gone and health wrecked. Now you understand, don't you, why I didn't feel so gay as the rest of the town about this millionaire business?"

"What's the use o' wastin' advice on a hobo?" said Ike desperately.

"Didn't Dr. Cromwell offer you something for your lots?"

"What good are they to him, now the railroad ain't comin'?"

"He doesn't care anything about the railroad."

"What!"

"Who do you think he is, anyhow?"

"He's a real-estate man buyin' ahead o' the railroad."

"Oh, my land! If I'd only known *that* was what the town was banking on! This man is Dr. Darwin Cromwell, the nerve specialist. We've known him for years. He attended father at Utopia when he broke down."

"Well, what 'n thunder does he want here?"

"He thinks Ephemera is the best place for nerves on the Coast ——"

"I guess he was sure of it when I asked a million and a half for my lots."

"He wants to build a sanatorium here and improve the town. There's only one piece of your property he really needs — that's the one you called Lakeside Drive."

"Lord! and that's the one I offered to throw into the bargain for $9,000!"

"Better write to him quick and close it," said Goldie, beginning again to nail shingles.

Rat-tat-tat!

"Goldie!"

"Yes?"

"Can't I help?"

"There's another hammer in the woodshed."

With the hammer under his arm, Ike lumbered to the roof beside her. He settled rather too close to render any efficient assistance.

"Goldie," he said, taking her hand, "I want you — can't you ——"

"Yes," she said, dropping her hammer and kissing him in the presence of all Ephemera. "I want you — I always did. Ephemera needs us to make it blossom — the right way. We've got the kinds of imagination that can do anything working together. Yours is the kind that can plan a metropolis in a sage-brush desert; mine can build a home there."

"Stop! Henry Battle's looking at us," she said finally, releasing her hand and going back to her shingles.

Rat-tat-tat!

"And, oh, Ike!"

"Yes, Goldie?"

Rat-tat-tat!

"There's something else I forgot to mention in the excitement. You know the big boom's going to be at Utopia on account of the railroad?"

"Yes — so I hear."

"Well, dad owns about half the property in that burg."

Even this news did not stop the industrious duet of the hammers on the roof of the chicken-house.

Copyright, Harris & Ewing

THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES. CHIEF JUSTICE WHITE, SITTING IN THE CENTER, WROTE THE DECISION WHICH COMPELLED THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY TO SPLIT UP INTO THIRTY-FOUR PARTS

THE GREATEST KILLING IN WALL STREET

BY

ALBERT W. ATWOOD

ON May 15 of last year the Supreme Court of the United States, in stiff black gowns assembled, arose and gave out this final judgment:

"Seven men and a corporate machine have seized unlawfully the second greatest mineral product of this country, and are converting it into mountainous private fortunes. For the safety of the Republic, we now declare that this dangerous conspiracy must be ended by November 15."

Immediately a great noise of talking ran across the continent, and over the whole world. That band of bold and strident legal thinkers, the public prosecutors for the United States, had destroyed the greatest single menace to the country! The great secret power of Wall Street had been smashed!

From one place alone no sound emerged. On that day, and that week, and that month, nothing was heard from the office of the Standard Oil Company — that strange rectangular stone building that stands in lower Broadway like a substantial county jail tilted up on one end.

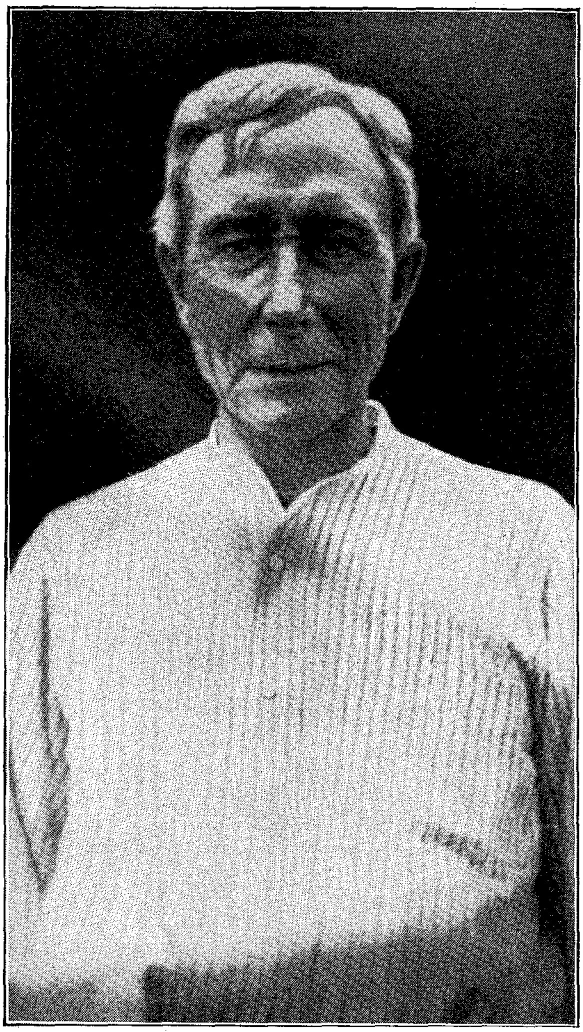
For twenty-five years it has stood there, always the same. Above its entrance lies, as plainly as if painted, its old motto — "Hush, hush!" Alone of the office buildings in New York, there is no directory of its tenants in its entrance corridors; its halls are dark and silent; and even on many of the ground-glass doors leading into its scores of offices there is not one word of lettering to show what man or corporation works within.

The seven men were growing old; one of them was dead — since the government started suing them. John D. Rockefeller was anxiously and deliberately studying long life; William Rockefeller, more anxiously and urgently, was hunting escape from death across the world. More and more the management of the Standard Oil was coming into the hands of their aging associates — the men who had been lieutenants in the '70's: John D. Archbold, a round-faced man of sixty-five; E. T. Bedford, a ruddy, side-whiskered type, like the factory owner in the New England melodrama; C. M. Pratt, a refined, studious man who looks like a member of the faculty of a Massachusetts college; and H. C. Folger, Jr., the secretary of the old Standard Oil Company — a lean, delicate, thin-bearded man of fifty-five, whose passion is the study of Shakespeare.

The aging men in the Standard Oil building bowed silently to the decree of the court. "There is nothing to say," they repeated sadly; "we will carry out the decision of the Supreme Court."

They were very sad, and grieved, and polite.

Meanwhile rumor ran riot through the newspapers. This hundred million dollar corporation of corporations had been split open by the government; there were more than two hundred separate companies in it. One moment it was said that there would be thirty-four new concerns to satisfy the decision of the court that there had been thirty-four concerns in which competition had been unnaturally stifled; the next, it was stated that there would be five. The truth was that no one could know anything about it — least of all Wall Street. Of all the great corporations of the country, this one had never made a report, even to the six thousand stockholders who owned it. It was run in silence by the aged men, exactly like a private bank in a country town.



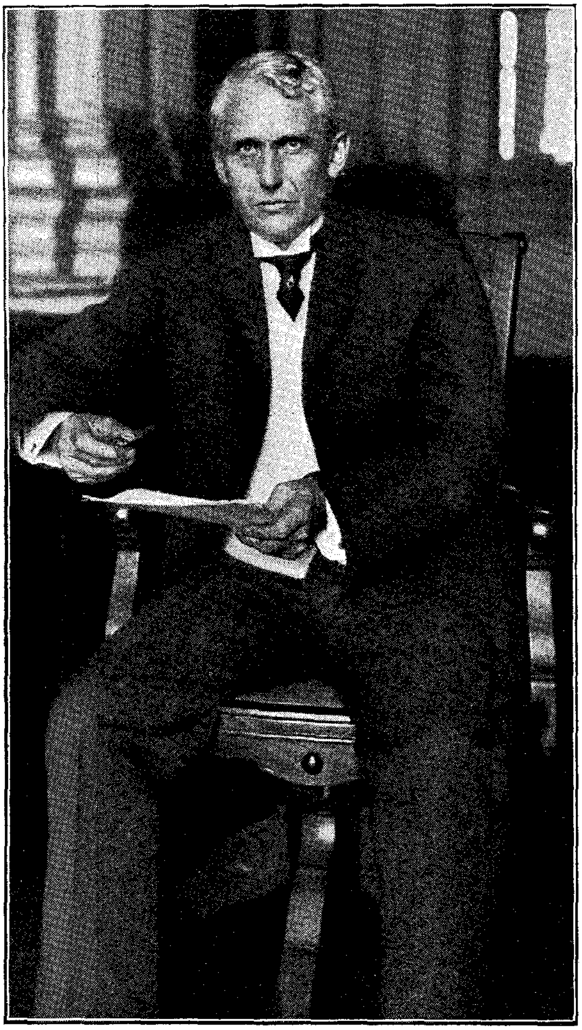
JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, PAUSING IN HIS CHASE OF LONG LIFE ACROSS THE GOLF LINKS. IN RECENT LITIGATION LAWYERS OPPOSED TO THE OIL TRUST ASSERTED THAT MR. ROCKEFELLER IS NOW WORTH $900,000,000, AN INCREASE OF $100,000,000 SINCE THE "DISSOLUTION" OF THE TRUST. HE STILL OWNS ONE QUARTER OF ALL THE STOCKS OF THE THIRTY-FOUR COMPANIES INTO WHICH THE TRUST WAS DIVIDED

For the next month no further sound; nothing from 26 Broadway. On July 15, just two months after the Supreme Court's decision, a single word was given out to say that no statement could be expected for a month.

Two weeks later, on the last day of July, the press-agent of the Standard Oil, a stately old playwright and ex-dramatic critic, employed at a big salary to see that as near nothing as possible gets into the newspapers, called the reporters to his desk, and handed out to each his sheet of typewritten "flimsy" — the first statement of the Standard Oil, prepared by its secretary, the Shakespearean scholar, Mr. Folger.

The management had decided, it said, that the Supreme Court's decision demanded that the Standard Oil Company be divided into thirty-four separate companies — the main New Jersey company and thirty-three others. Stockholders on the company's books September 1 would each be given his fraction of shares in the thirty-three companies about December 1, to add to his existing stock in the old company, the Standard Oil of New Jersey.

It was not pleasant news to the small owners of the stock. The value of Standard Oil stock had gone down from over $800 a share — reached in the early 1900's — to about $675, when the courts' last decision came; now, when this announcement was given out, the stock slid down $40 more a share. The time of chaos and utter dissolution had come. Nobody knew — except the soundless men on the inside — what would happen when the end came.



FRANK B. KELLOGG, THE GOVERNMENT LAWYER WHOSE TIRELESS EFFORTS RESULTED IN THE TAKING OF MORE THAN ELEVEN MILLION WORDS OF TESTIMONY IN THE STANDARD OIL SUIT. AS CHIEF FACTOR IN BRINGING IT ABOUT, MR. KELLOGG NATURALLY THINKS THE "DISSOLUTION" OF THE TRUST HAS BEEN A GOOD THING FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, DESPITE THE ADVANCE OF $200,000,000 IN THE PRICE OF ITS STOCK

Standard Oil stock had never been listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It was the will of John D. Rockefeller, the owner of a quarter of it, that it should not be. He was against speculation; he was against publicity. But now a few brokers began to set to work to study the one chief source of public knowledge of the Standard Oil finances in the world—the eleven and a half million slippery and reluctant words of testimony which the United States had forced from it in four and a half years of litigation.

Small stockholders in a few cases were selling. But mostly they held on and waited in a kind of daze; many of them, of course, had bought at higher levels before the government brought the suit.

Their wonder now became: "What fractions shall we get? How will they divide the stock of the small companies?" The main holding company had a curious issue of stock — $98,338,300; that is, 983,383 shares of $100 each. It was felt to be certain that the stock would be increased to some even figure — if for nothing else than to get an even fraction. It might be raised a few shares to make an even million shares — or it might be made five million shares — because five million hundred-dollar shares would represent much closer the real value of the property than one million.

The latter, so the rumor went, was the plan that younger influences desired. But not John D. Rockefeller, the chief owner. There must be no inflation of his company. While newer trusts had pumped hundreds of millions of wind and water into their capital stock, and sold it for the public's money, he had seen the Standard Oil created out of the earnings of that first fateful $700 he had saved to create it, with the aid of his associates in the Cleveland Baptist Sunday-school, in the late '50's. It was not the public's money or property; it was his money, his property, and those of his associates — a private business enterprise, as all normal business was in the '50's and the '60's. There would be no inflation of the Standard Oil. The aging management agreed, and the old company lawyers. John Rockefeller's advice was best — as it always had been.

Nothing more for four months from the secret offices. Nothing from Secretary Folger; no more flimsy from the ex-dramatic critic employed to peddle silence to the newspapers. Reporters went up the elevators, through the quiet corridors, into the soft-carpeted offices with their old-fashioned dark desks; were let in by the deferential negro attendants to the presence of the managers. There was nothing to be said. The Standard Oil Company was working sadly and desperately to carry out the full intent of the law.

On November 15, the last day of legal grace, the second announcement came. The stockholders were notified that on December 1 they would be given their fractions. And then on that first day of December came the deluge. Each and all of the six thousand received their fractions — their little nine hundred and eighty three thousand three hundred and eighty-thirds.

It was a day of madness in respectable families all over the United States. Here in the registered mail came the assorted package of strange paper mysteries which had been confined in one share of that unknown aggregation called the Standard Oil:

One $\frac{994}{983383}$ of Swan & Finch Company; face value 10 cents.

One $\frac{7143}{983383}$ of Washington Oil Company; face value 7 cents.

One $\frac{1995}{983383}$ of Borne-Scrymser Company; face value 20 cents.

One $\frac{2493}{983383}$ of Colonial Oil Company; face value 25 cents.

And so on through all the nine hundred and eighty-three thousand three hundred and eighty-thirds up to the $\frac{249995}{983383}$ of the Standard Oil of California with its face value of twenty-five dollars and forty-two cents.

JAMES A. MOFFETT, THE SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY OF NEW JERSEY. HE HAS PROVED A TOUGH WITNESS FOR LAWYERS TRYING TO BRING OUT FACTS DAMAGING TO THE TRUST IN RECENT LITIGATION

There were three hundred stockholders who had one share of stock; many more had three and five and ten apiece. More than half of the six thousand stockholders had less than fifty-one. Half stunned, the little stockholder looked over his assortment.

What was this? Yesterday he had one share of stock, a tangible thing worth nearly $700. To-day he had thirty-four mathematical mysteries, which would require a corps of bookkeepers to follow around. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was known of Standard Oil; but what in the name of Bedlam was a quarter's worth of Borne-Scrymser?

With one accord the little stockholders gathered up their thirty-four assorted engravings and hunted up the nearest family banker or brokerage firm. They wanted a holding of stock, not a mixture of small "shin-plasters." Their natural desire was to sell.

The brokers had not handled Standard Oil; it was not listed upon any Stock Exchange. The more they learned of it, as their customers came in, the less they wanted it. It cost $4.39 simply to make one transfer of the thirty-four different fractions of stock contained in one share of the old Standard Oil. A broker's usual business is to sell hundred-dollar shares of stock to customers at a commission of twelve and one half cents a share. They could not handle this business on such a basis — obviously. It was a nuisance to handle at all the few shares that would come from the ordinary broker's clients. So the business in Standard Oil very quickly drifted into the hands of specialists.

The fact is that a year ago, when the Supreme Court spoke, there was just one brokerage firm in all the world recognized as specialists in Standard Oil — Ackermann & Coles of New York. Ackermann, the senior partner, had been previously an employee of the "trust." In the next few months other firms came into this special business, among them Pouch & Company, in which F. T. Bedford, son of E. T. Bedford, one of the big figures in the Standard Oil, is partner. A second was Smithers & Company, a strong Wall Street house, whose friendly relations with members of the "inside" Oil group were not unknown to other Stock Exchange brokers.

Various other brokerage firms, big and little, came into this new special business. But these three strong firms, close to the inside interests in Standard Oil, did, and still do, a larger business in the stock than all the rest combined. They had the knowledge and the customers.

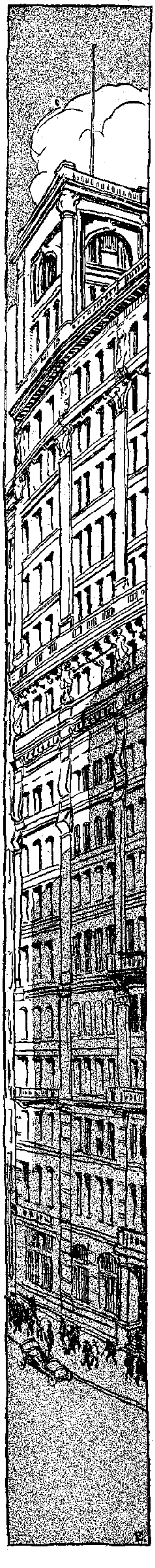
Meanwhile, one by one, the time of dividends came on. Certificates for seven cents were insane enough; but declaring dividends on them rose to the mathematical height of idiocy. The Chesebrough Manufacturing Company sent out a dividend of ten per cent; and every owner of one share of Standard Oil was given his portion of it — $2\frac{82}{100}$ cents. The company was forced to pay each single share its dividend in a three-cent check — a net dead loss of $\frac{18}{100}$ of a cent, and a matter of distraction in book keeping.

The Galena Signal Oil Company, sending out its dividends, had twelve hundred separate checks of less than ten cents each — six hundred of them for three cents. It cost a two-cent stamp and an envelop to send each one of these and a two-cent stamped envelop for returning a receipt; and, after that, in many cases the cost of following up and mailing out requests for a return of the receipts. A single three-cent dividend cost in postage charges as high as eight and ten cents. The three-cent dividend checks were not cashed; their holders tore them up or tacked them on the wall as souvenirs. And more and more the disgust of the small stockholders grew; and more and more they let their holdings go.

HENRY C. FOLGER, JR., ALTHOUGH ONE OF THE GREATEST COLLECTORS OF SHAKSPEARIANA IN AMERICA, FINDS TIME TO BE AN ACTIVE MANAGER OF THE STANDARD OIL INDUSTRY. UPON HIM AND A FEW OTHERS FELL THE ACTUAL DETAILS OF THE "DISSOLUTION"

The buyers were principally, at first, the Stock Exchange firms engaged in taking up the Standard Oil "splinters," as they were called, and piecing them together in entire shares of stock. It was simply a private sale of property — a sale, of course, from the small man who knew nothing to the specialist who knew much more. And the profits to the broker were correspondingly large.

On December 26 the offices of the various companies shifted around: many of them crossed the corridor; several of them crossed many States. Henceforward they could be operated separately. But still no more information came from inside about the different concerns — whose names and business, even, had been unknown to the small stockholder. Early in January, annual meetings were held — of the Standard Oil of Ohio, the Standard Oil of Nebraska, the Standard Oil of New Jersey, the Colonial Oil Company. But no information was given, or apparently would be given, to the public.



Then all at once the full force of the new situation began to dawn upon the small stockholders. Not only were they utterly without information concerning the new companies, but the majority owners, who ran them, were not going to give them any information — not the slightest — of what property the companies owned, or what business they did, or what profits they were making. And then the great main "killing" in the stock began.

The most conspicuous corporation in the Standard Oil, next to the main New Jersey "holding" corporation itself, was the Standard Oil of Indiana, the million-dollar company on which Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis placed his sensational fine of $29,000,000 for railroad rebates. It was the great refining and distributing corporation of the central part of the country. Every one who had read the testimony in the government suit knew that this company had an enormous surplus, and that it had paid as high as 850 per cent dividends in a single year. Unfortunately, there was no likelihood that a small stockholder would ever learn these facts himself. The only way he could do so would be to go to some reference library, and unearth them from a copy of the eleven million words of testimony in the government suit. And, incidentally, there are very few public reference libraries in the country that own these documents.

Even in December, just after dissolution took place, a still hunt was going on for fractional shares of Standard Oil of Indiana. The holders of these "splinters" were selling them as low as $1,400 a share. Gradually the stock worked up, by hundreds of dollars a share, until late in January it was selling at about $4,000. Nothing whatever had been given out by the management concerning the company — nothing of its business or profits or plans.

Suddenly on February 6 an announcement was given to the newspapers: The stock of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana was to be increased from $1,000,000 to $30,000,000. That was all. It was not said how the new $29,000,000 stock would be distributed — whether it would be given away to stockholders, or paid for by them at $100 a share. The stock leaped up and down by hundreds of dollars a jump. Eight days later it was announced that the stock would be given away to stockholders — twenty-nine new shares for every old one. The stock rose to $7,000 a share.

Stock multiplication followed leisurely in one company after another, and is still going on, generally with no notice at all, and no statement whatever of what the earnings and profits were; in no case was notice of plans for extra dividend given until after the stock had risen, because of quiet buying, to well toward its final price.

In March the Standard Oil Company of Nebraska put out a stock dividend of thirty-three and one third per cent. Nothing was known concerning this company, except the information forced out by the government that in 1906 its earnings were about thirteen per cent. The stock slid up in three months, under quiet buying, from $115 to $350 a share. In June the Standard Oil Company of California made known without any flourish of trumpets that its capital stock would be increased from $25,000,000 to $50,000,000. Before this information was let out the price of the stock had risen from around $140 a share to nearly $200.

The Kentucky Company Runs Wild

In March the little Standard Oil of Kentucky, a million-dollar marketing company, suddenly went wild. It was quoted at $175 a share; stories of fabulous assets, immense increases in stock, started floating about. One morning it opened at $710 a share; the next sale was at $900; the third at $1,000. The following day the price fell to about $400, where it still remains. No one knows whether the company will increase its stock, or pay big dividends, or anything about what it is worth. Somewhere between $150 and $1,000 a share, no doubt, but who outside the silent men can tell?

By this time Standard Oil — traded at first in quiet over telephone — was bawled loudly in the market on the "curb." An orgy of speculation was on by small brokers and traders, like nothing of its kind in recent years. The slow-moving $600 and $700 stock, handled only by one firm of specialists, was scattered now into thirty-four little fragments — every one a field for the blindest gambling.

The brokers early in the field — especially the three big firms closest to the Standard Oil — and their clients were the first great profit-takers. One house was credited with buying three hundred shares of Standard Oil in one short period after the Supreme Court decision, at a total cost of some $60,000 less than what the fragments of stock are worth now. But that was only a beginning.

The Waiter Who Bought Rothschild's Stock

Stories of the speculator's strikes from time to time came up out of this mysterious jumble of hundreds of millions of dollars. One man, a waiter in a New York restaurant, bought several shares of Prairie Gas & Oil stock, receiving, curiously enough, his brokers say, the identical certificate that had been sold by Baron Rothschild. In a few days the waiter cleared up several thousand dollars on the Rothschild stock.

Frank V. Strauss, a publisher of theatrical programs, was a heavy winner. He bought Standard Oil of Kentucky for $425; it immediately sailed to $1,000 a share, at a "paper" profit to Strauss of $34,500. Before he could "cash in" more than a part of it, the stock had dropped again. But he made a small fortune on this and other Standard Oil stocks.

A customer walked into a broker's office, laid down $3,000, and said: "I want to buy something which is an out-and-out gamble."

"All right!" said the broker. "I'll buy you Standard Oil of New Jersey."

He had hardly finished speaking, when a boy handed him a bulletin saying that a rumor was abroad that the company would declare a dividend of one hundred per cent. The next quotation on this stock showed a jump of $40 a share; the second a decline of $20 from that.

It was not all velvet, this speculation. The story of the Colonial Oil shows the possibilities of mistake for the inside buyer. The government testimony showed that in 1906 Colonial Oil was doing a large and profitable business in South Africa and Australia. As high as $500 a share was given for its stock on this basis. Later it was found that its big business had been transferred during the six years' interval to another corporation; and the stock slid down again to $125 a share.

$200,000,000 for the "Insiders"

But all this speculation was the froth on the crest of the big main wave. Underneath, the men who really knew were quietly feeding on the stock that was being disgorged by the little stockholders. By the middle of March this matter was made a scandal in the newspapers. Criticism arose to such a point that the Standard Oil press-agent broke the silence again and gave out another sheet of flimsy to the newspapers.

Adventurous spirits — a very few of them — had climbed into that tower of silence at 26 Broadway, to ask what they should do about their stocks. The most they got was the non-committal advice either to keep all their stock or to sell it all. It was information that had been seldom and privately given. But now the warmth of public opinion penetrating even this dark place brought out a statement denying that the big "insiders" of the company were speculating in the stock, and giving all stockholders the advice to hang on to their holdings.

It was March 16 when this came out. The big "melons" had been cut — including the thirty-time multiplication of the Indiana company; the market had already received its warnings from the great advance in prices which had been made, and the sensational "killing" in the stocks had nearly all taken place. By the end of March, in three months' time, $200,000,000 had been added to the value of the stocks for the men who now held them — the biggest "killing" on a single stock in so short a time in the history of the financial district about Wall Street.

Who were these men who made it? Who were those who bought the small holdings? To this latter question there is only one answer given by those who watched closest the transfer as it occurred. They were

mostly men with the information of the "inside" — men connected with the Standard Oil, buying largely through the three big firms which from the first have been connected, directly or indirectly, with Standard Oil.

That the great "insiders" — the half dozen central owners of the stock — had bought during the time of the big rise is denied. If they had been buying they certainly would not have bought in their own names. It would involve an entirely unnecessary risk of action against them by the Supreme Court.

The general theory given out by brokers to inquirers is that most of the buying had been for men in charge of various companies, the active managers under the great owners, who knew intimately the value and possibilities of their properties.

The "insiders" really took a negative part in the transaction. The United States government had forced more than two hundred million dollars upon them; they kept their mouths shut and took it. It was simply a forced sale of gold dollars for fifty cents.

The United States government did not create new physical property, of course. The surplus which the companies divided had all the time been in the companies — the vast accumulations of a decade— waiting until it could be distributed without general public clamor. The United States merely certified that now the wicked and baneful "trust" had been converted into an innocent business organization. Immediately upon this certification by the Supreme Court, the hidden millions were released for distribution; they lay somewhere in a score and a half of corporations, and no one in the world but the "insiders" could know in just what corporations they were concealed.

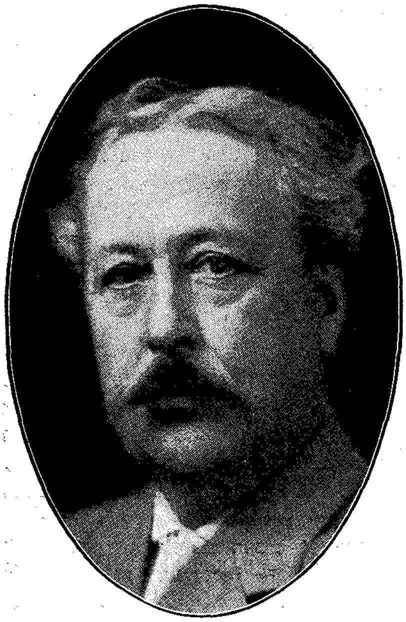
ALFRED C. BEDFORD, VICE-PRESIDENT AND TREASURER OF THE STANDARD OIL COMPANY OF NEW JERSEY. HE IS A NEPHEW OF E. T. BEDFORD, ONE OF THE OLD GUARD IN THE COMPANY. THREE MEMBERS OF THE BEDFORD FAMILY ARE ACTIVE IN OIL TRUST AFFAIRS

The Wiping Out of the Small Stockholder

Now, of this $200,000,000 distribution, a quarter was disbursed to John D. Rockefeller, even if he bought no new stock, and a quarter more to the half dozen men and estates who held, with him, a little more than half of the great property. But comparatively little came to the small stockholders of fifty shares and under, who made up more than half of the stockholders of the great corporation a year ago. Automatically, by the action of the United States, they were wiped out of the ownership of the property of Standard Oil. And as, for one reason or another, knowledge of the present stockholdings of various concerns has leaked out, this fact has been clearly indicated.

In one company the extent of the falling off has been definitely shown. This Standard Oil subsidiary sent out, in January, sixty-one hundred checks for dividends. In April, when the next dividend was declared, the number of stockholders had decreased by two thousand.

The specialists in Standard Oil stocks on Wall Street all agree on this eliminating of small



J. I. C. CLARKE, THE GENIAL AND DIGNIFIED DEAN OF AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS AND EX-MANAGING EDITOR OF NEW YORK CITY NEWSPAPERS, WHO IS EMPLOYED, AT WHAT IS REPUTED TO BE AN ENORMOUS SALARY, TO KEEP UNFAVORABLE NEWS ABOUT THE OIL TRUST OUT OF THE PAPERS

stockholders. In many companies, they say, six and seven hundred stockholders dropped out immediately. The great stockholders, even if they have not bought stock, have certainly not sold.

But the speculation or even the dropping of shares by the small stockholder is not the main consideration in any real estimate of the whole transaction. All this happened, it is true, but the action of the United States went further than this. Even if the small stockholder had retained his holdings, whatever voice he could have had in the properties was automatically taken away from him by the action of the government.

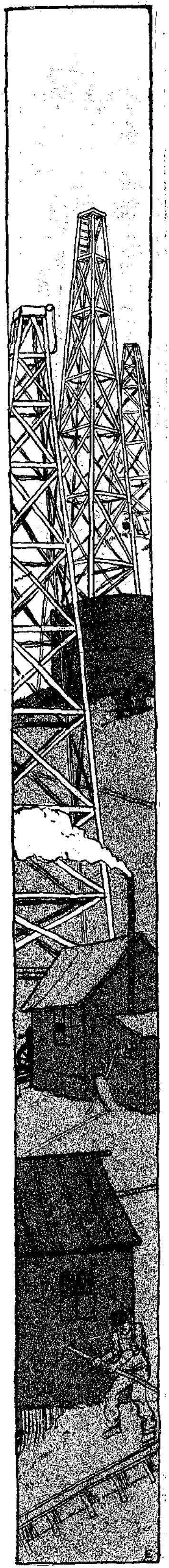
Immediately upon the dissolution of the main holding company, it was decided, for self-evident reasons, that nothing less than one full share of any stock should have a vote in any of the concerns. Now, the ownership of one share of Washington Oil would have required the ownership of fourteen hundred shares of the old Standard Oil stock — an investment of a million dollars. Five hundred shares of the old stock would have been needed to own one share of Borne-Scrymser, an investment of $350,000; nearly a hundred shares to own one share of Standard Oil of Indiana. There was only one possible result: In most of the new concerns, a full half of the stockholders of the old Standard Oil Company were at once deprived of their vote; in many of the new concerns, four fifths of them lost their voting power.

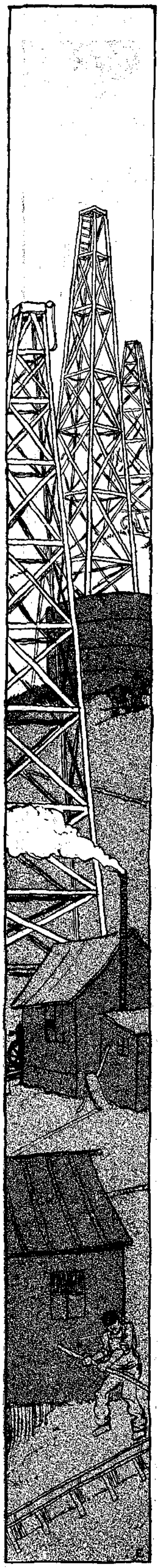
How the sale of stock, and the deprivation of small stockholders of their voting rights, have together acted to concentrate the power of the "insiders" over the Standard Oil properties, is well shown by the great Standard Oil Company of Indiana, in which the most spectacular "killing" took place. A year ago it had controlling it the six thousand stockholders of the Standard Oil; this spring it had fewer than nine hundred and fifty stockholders eligible to vote: five sixths of its voting stockholders had disappeared.

So, then, the immediate effect of the government's action is this: It has eliminated the *small stockholders, and has* concentrated the ownership and control of the Standard Oil Company more than years of normal commercial development could have done.

John D. Rockefeller holds in his name, as is shown by figures of as recent date as this spring, one quarter of the stock in all of the Standard Oil properties; six other individuals and estates hold a little over a quarter more; around them is a larger group of great holders of stock; and further down come the associates and active managers who are directing the business. These men — especially the half dozen interests which own a majority control — consider the Standard Oil as much their private property as a family horse.

Their attitude was clearly shown by the testimony of John D. Rockefeller, given in New York the last of May, in the suit over the control of the Waters-Pierce distributing





company. Upon the dissolution of the Standard Oil, he showed, the great holders kept together as a matter of course. Archbold and Pratt and Bedford and Folger and James A. Moffett simply arranged the management under whatever names suited them — themselves retiring quite largely from public management and giving the ostensible control into agents' hands. It was a process too obvious and commonplace for Mr. Rockefeller to follow in any detail; he merely signed the proxies asked for by the inner group's managers. It was the same old private property in a different form.

Now, being private property, it will be managed as such. The secrecy will be greater than ever. There are now thirty-four different companies; nobody except the "insiders" know what is in them, what they earn or what they are to do. Nobody will know, from present indications, except in the few cases where special reasons have brought out meager information.

It is common rumor in Wall Street, just at this time of writing, that there are now ten companies of the thirty-four which have outlived the purposes for which they were created, and are bound sooner or later to die; that in some of the remaining twenty-four lie fabulous assets and possibilities. Who knows the ten? Who knows the great bonanzas in the twenty-four? Only the "insiders."

There is only one way of safe public buying into the Standard Oil properties, and that is to buy all thirty-four of them — and this is now, to all practical intents and purposes, impossible.

It is the theory of the courts and of our present law, of course, that death will be the great dissolver of monopolies — now that the great artificial stockholder created in the so-called holding company, like the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, is destroyed. But every one who has watched great modern combinations knows that this is not true. When once these combinations are bound together, they are not unbound by the death of any individual, except to be tied up in still greater combinations. The Standard Oil Company will not be dissolved commercially, because it can not be; its controlling owners will not let it scatter, for the simple reason that they are not fools.

The Standard Oil Company, commercially speaking, was not merely an aggregation of miscellaneous concerns; it was a carefully adjusted single machine for handling and refining the oil of America. Its value depended upon a nice adjustment and economy of its parts which was the wonder of the commercial world.

The owners of the property understand perfectly well that the dissolution which the Supreme Court has contemplated would be commercial suicide. For the owners of a Standard Oil refinery to let control of a pipe-line carrying its oil pass into the hands of other men would mean destruction. They never will do such a thing, because the moment they did it their property would lose its value.

The aging men at the head of the Standard Oil may all soon die; their heirs may be as idle or as prodigal as can be conceived: but at the center of the Standard Oil will sit — as in all great enterprises of the kind — the new social organism which the development of our great corporations is creating, the "inside" group of ownership and control. It will change in personnel; men will come in and go out of it: but the thing itself is immortal; it is a necessity of great modern business.

Failure of the Northern Securities Decree

The present campaign is the second spectacular action of its kind by the government of the United States. The smashing of the Northern Securities Company seven years ago was the first great attempt to change the face of economic nature by Supreme Court decree.

The outcome is well known. Within four months after the decree, the value of the stocks in the two railroads concerned had risen $150,000,000. A great part of this profit went to the men in the inner group. Since then great holders of this stock have died; their stocks have been willed away. But the entire control of the two railroads still lies exactly where it lay under the Securities Company — in the Hill-Morgan group of "insiders." The individuals changed, and will change again. The group remains; the value of the property demands it.

Since then a variety of other government actions have taken place — all with the same result. The great Tobacco Company's dissolution, and now the still more spectacular smashing of the Standard Oil, have both come to the same conclusion. The artificial stockholder — the corporation holding other corporation stocks — is killed. By doing this the government has forced the operations of great concerns more and more into the "inside" group, and made possible the distribution of tens of millions more to the multimillionaires.

And Now the Division of the Profits

The "insiders" in the Standard Oil are now busy dividing their huge profits along the line made possible by the law of the land, enforced by the Supreme Court. They have, to this time, increased the face value of the securities in their various concerns to more than three and a quarter times the face value of the stock in the old Standard Oil Company. And it is well understood that this is only a part of the increase in the stock which will finally be issued.

So far as can be calculated now, this threefold issue of stock seems likely to pay dividends well in excess of those paid on the old Standard Oil shares. It is not impossible that twice as much money will be distributed in dividends. The dividends on the Standard Oil stock have been held down for years to $40,000,000 a year, while the earnings in 1906 and 1907 are known to have been over $80,000,000, and a Standard Oil official has said that since then the earnings of one year reached $100,000,000. Now that there is no danger of prosecution for declaring great dividends on the stock, the property can distribute what it really earns.

It will also earn very much more than it has. A year and a half ago the Standard Oil Company issued bitter public complaints that the flood of newly found petroleum was so great that the markets of the world were glutted and that prices must inevitably be smashed to pieces. This year the price of kerosene has gone up twenty-five and thirty per cent; the price of gasolene thirty-five and forty-five per cent. The only reason for this is that the private owners of Standard Oil have strengthened their grip on the oil and oil-refining machinery of the country greatly over what it was a year or two ago.

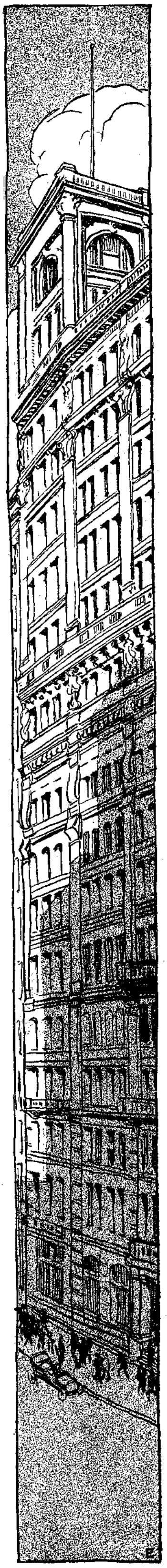
How can the government move to prevent this rise in prices now? Formerly it could attack the Standard Oil corporation and dissolve it. Now whom will it attack? Will it compel the private owners of all these properties to fight their own properties against one another? Can any law, as J. Pierpont Morgan has queried, be framed to compel a man to compete with himself?

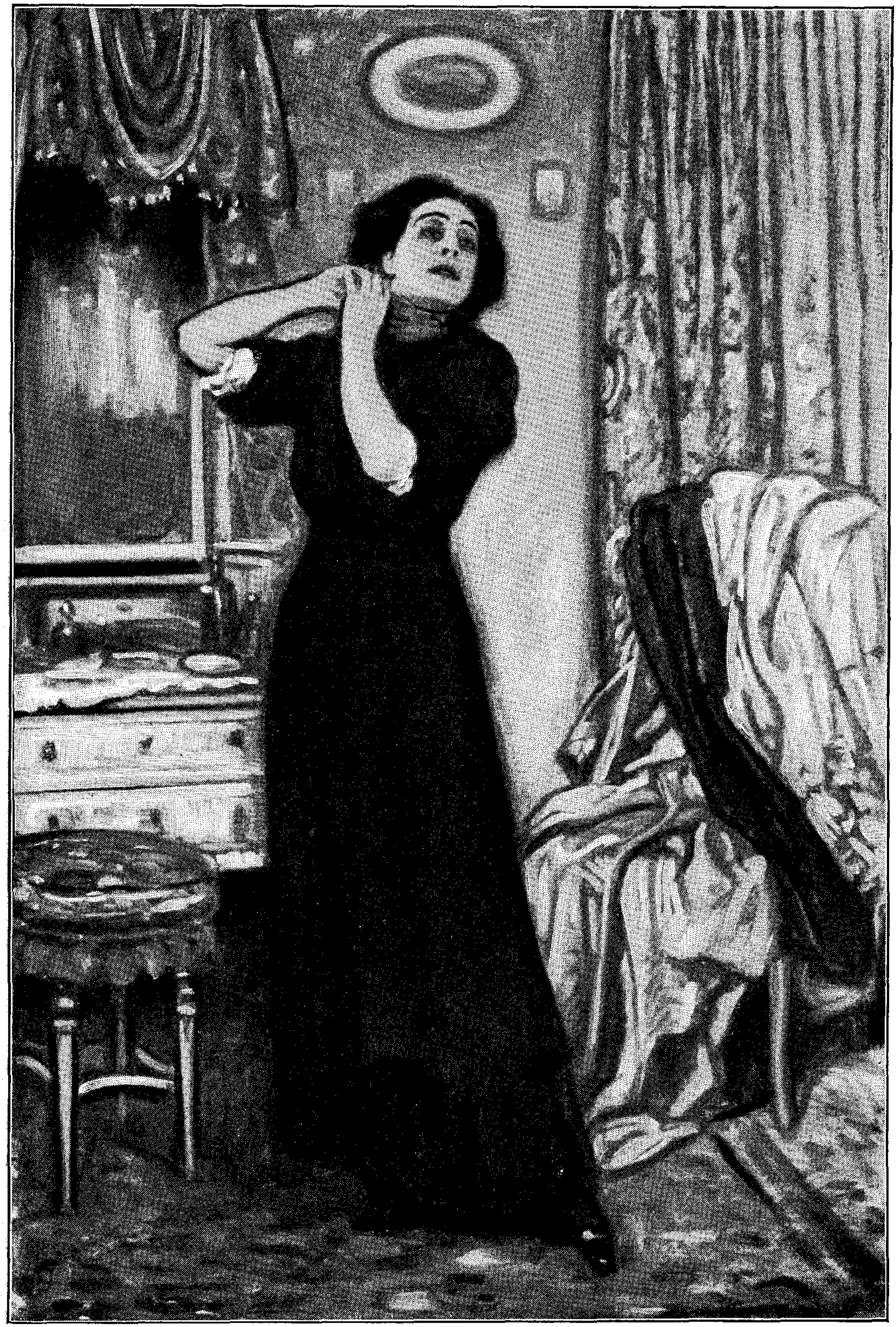
No one can predict what profits the private owners of the Standard Oil will take and divide, through their various corporations, in the next few years. To John D. Rockefeller alone —with total holdings of $80,000,000 or $100,000,000 a year — will come $20,000,000 or $25,000,000 every year; that is, $55,000 or $65,000 a day from this one great factory of money. And all these tens of millions go out again each year, seeking the position of "inside" management and control of the other great industries of the United States.

Meanwhile the national uproar over the Standard Oil is passing. John D. Rockefeller, with his sly, mysterious face, pursues his quest of long life across the golf fields. William Rockefeller hunts fiercely across the earth to escape fatal disease. In the old Standard Oil building the silence remains unbroken. The sound of the soft footfalls of the aging men on the old-fashioned carpets comes and goes; subdued voices murmur in their meetings of committees, as they divide their millions; and over the entrance hangs the old sign:

"Hush! Hush! Shut your mouth and carry on your business!"

And automatically, all over the United States, corporate property slides into the private hands of the men with the knowledge of the "inside": a little group, smaller and smaller as the great industrial operations of the country more and more converge and consolidate under natural economic laws, and more and more are coördinated under the control of the central group of management around Wall Street.





"CLARA VAVRIKA WAS TYING A WINE-COLORED RIBBON ABOUT HER THROAT WHEN JOHANNA APPEARED WITH HER COFFEE"

THE BOHEMIAN GIRL

BY

WILLA SIBERT CATHER

AUTHOR OF "ALEXANDER'S MASQUERADE," "THE TROLL GARDEN," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SIGISMOND DE IVANOWSKI

THE trans-continental express swung along the windings of the Sand River Valley, and in the rear seat of the observation car a young man sat greatly at his ease, not in the least discomfited by the fierce sunlight which beat in upon his brown face and neck and strong back. There was a look of relaxation and of great passivity about his broad shoulders, which seemed almost too heavy until he stood up and squared them. He wore a pale flannel shirt and a blue silk necktie with loose ends. His trousers were wide and belted at the waist, and his short sack-coat hung open. His heavy shoes had seen good service. His reddish-brown hair, like his clothes, had a foreign cut. He had deep-set, dark blue eyes under heavy reddish eyebrows. His face was kept clean only by close shaving, and even the sharpest razor left a glint of yellow in the smooth brown of his skin. His teeth and the palms of his hands were very white. His head, which looked hard and stubborn, lay indolently in the green cushion of the wicker chair, and as he looked out at the ripe summer country a teasing, not unkindly smile played over his lips. Once, as he basked thus comfortably, a quick light flashed in his eyes, curiously dilating the pupils, and his mouth became a hard, straight line, gradually relaxing into its former smile of rather kindly mockery. He told himself, apparently, that there was no point in getting excited; and he seemed a master hand at taking his ease when he could. Neither the sharp whistle of the locomotive nor the brakeman's call disturbed him. It was not until after the train had stopped that he rose, put on a Panama hat, took from the rack a small valise and a flute-case, and stepped deliberately to the station platform. The baggage was already unloaded, and the stranger presented a check for a battered sole-leather steamer-trunk.

"Can you keep it here for a day or two?" he asked the agent. "I may send for it, and I may not."

"Depends on whether you like the country, I suppose?" demanded the agent in a challenging tone.

"Just so."

The agent shrugged his shoulders, looked scornfully at the small trunk, which was marked "N. E.," and handed out a claim check without further comment. The stranger watched him as he caught one end of the trunk and dragged it into the express room. The agent's manner seemed to remind him of something amusing. "Doesn't seem to be a very big place," he remarked, looking about.

"It's big enough for us," snapped the agent, as he banged the trunk into a corner.

That remark, apparently, was what Nils Ericson had wanted. He chuckled quietly as he took a leather strap from his pocket and swung his valise around his shoulder. Then he settled his Panama securely on his head, turned up his trousers, tucked the flute-case under his arm, and started off across the fields. He gave the town, as he would have said, a wide berth, and cut through a great fenced pasture, emerging, when he rolled under the barbed wire at the farther corner, upon a white dusty road which ran straight up from the river valley to the high prairies, where the ripe wheat stood yellow and the tin roofs and weather-cocks were twinkling in the fierce sunlight. By the time Nils had done three miles, the sun was sinking and the farm-wagons on their way home from town came rattling by, covering him with dust and making him sneeze. When one of the farmers pulled up and offered to give him a lift, he clambered in willingly. The driver was a thin, grizzled old man with a long lean neck and a foolish sort of beard, like a goat's. "How fur ye goin'?" he asked, as he clucked to his horses and started off.

"Do you go by the Ericson place?"

"Which Ericson?" The old man drew in his reins as if he expected to stop again.

"Preacher Ericson's."

"Oh, the Old Lady Ericson's!" He turned and looked at Nils. "La, me! If you're goin' out there you might 'a' rid out in the automobile. That's a pity, now. The Old Lady Ericson was in town with her auto. You might 'a' heard it snortin' anywhere about the post-office er the butcher-shop."

"Has she a motor?" asked the stranger absently.

"'Deed an' she has! She runs into town every night about this time for her mail and meat for supper. Some folks say she's afraid her auto won't get exercise enough, but I say that's jealousy."

"Aren't there any other motors about here?"

"Oh, yes! we have fourteen in all. But nobody else gets around like the Old Lady Ericson. She's out, rain er shine, over the whole county, chargin' into town and out amongst her farms, an' up to her sons' places. Sure you ain't goin' to the wrong place?" He craned his neck and looked at Nils' flute-case with eager curiosity. "The old woman ain't got any piany that I knows on. Olaf, he has a grand. His wife's musical; took lessons in Chicago."

"I'm going up there to-morrow," said Nils imperturbably. He saw that the driver took him for a piano-tuner.

"Oh, I see!" The old man screwed up his eyes mysteriously. He was a little dashed by the stranger's non-communicativeness, but he soon broke out again.

"I'm one o' Mis' Ericson's tenants. Look after one of her places. I did own the place myself oncet, but I lost it a while back, in the bad years just after the World's Fair. Just as well, too, I say. Lets you out o' payin' taxes. The Ericsons do own most of the county now. I remember the old preacher's fav'rite text used to be, 'To them that hath shall be given.' They've spread something wonderful — run over this here country like bindweed. But I ain't one that begretches it to 'em. Folks is entitled to what they kin git; and they're hustlers. Olaf, he's in the Legislature now, and a likely man fur Congress. Listen, if that ain't the old woman comin' now. Want I should stop her?"

Nils shook his head. He heard the deep chug-chug of a motor vibrating steadily in the clear twilight behind them. The pale lights of the car swam over the hill, and the old man slapped his reins and turned clear out of the road, ducking his head at the first of three angry snorts from behind. The motor was running at a hot, even speed, and passed without turning an inch from its course. The driver was a stalwart woman who sat at ease in the front seat and drove her car bare-headed. She left a cloud of dust and a trail of gasoline behind her. Her tenant threw back his head and sneezed.

"Whew! I sometimes say I'd as lief be *before* Mrs. Ericson as behind her. She does beat all! Nearly seventy, and never lets another soul touch that car. Puts it into commission herself every morning, and keeps it tuned up by the hitch-bar all day. I never stop work for a drink o' water that I don't hear her a-churnin' up the road. I reckon her darter-in-laws never sets down easy nowadays. Never know when she'll pop in. Mis' Otto, she says to me: 'We're so afraid that thing'll blow up and do Ma some injury yet, she's so turrible venturesome.' Says I: 'I wouldn't stew, Mis' Otto; the old lady'll drive that car to the funeral of every darter-in-law she's got.' That was after the old woman had jumped a turrible bad culvert."

The stranger heard vaguely what the old man was saying. Just now he was experiencing something very much like homesickness, and he was wondering what had brought it about. The mention of a name or two, perhaps; the rattle of a wagon along a dusty road; the rank, resinous smell of sunflowers and ironweed, which the night damp brought up from the draws and low places; perhaps, more than all, the dancing lights of the motor that had plunged by. He squared his shoulders with a comfortable sense of strength.

The wagon, as it jolted westward, climbed a pretty steady upgrade. The country, receding from the rough river valley, swelled more and more gently, as if it had been smoothed out by the wind. On one of the last of the rugged ridges, at the end of a branch road, stood a grim square house with a tin roof and double porches. Behind the house stretched a row of broken, wind-racked poplars, and down the hill-slope to the left straggled the sheds and stables. The old man stopped his horses where the Ericsons' road branched across a dry sand creek that wound about the foot of the hill.

"That's the old lady's place. Want I should drive in?"

"No, thank you. I'll roll out here. Much obliged to you. Good night."

His passenger stepped down over the front wheel, and the old man drove on reluctantly, looking back as if he would like to see how the stranger would be received.

As Nils was crossing the dry creek he heard the restive tramp of a horse coming toward him down the hill. Instantly he flashed out of the road and stood behind a thicket of wild plum bushes that grew in the sandy bed. Peering through the dusk, he saw a light horse, under tight rein, descending the hill at a sharp walk. The rider was a slender woman — barely visible against the dark hillside — wearing an old-fashioned derby hat and a long riding-skirt. She sat lightly in the saddle, with her chin high, and seemed to be looking into the distance. As she passed the plum thicket her horse snuffed the air and shied. She struck him, pulling him in sharply, with an angry exclamation, "*Blázne!*" in Bohemian. Once in the main road, she let him out into a lope, and they soon emerged upon the crest of high land, where they moved along the sky-line, silhouetted against the band of faint color that lingered in the west. This horse and rider, with their free, rhythmical gallop, were the only moving things to be seen on the face of the flat country. They seemed, in the last sad light of evening, not to be there accidentally, but as an inevitable detail of the landscape.

Nils watched them until they had shrunk to a mere moving speck against the sky, then he crossed the sand creek and climbed the hill. When he reached the gate the front of the house was dark, but a light was shining from the side windows. The pigs were squealing in the hog corral, and Nils could see a tall boy, who carried two big wooden buckets, moving about among them. Half way between the barn and the house, the windmill wheezed lazily. Following the path that ran around to the back porch, Nils stopped to look through the screen door into the lamp-lit kitchen. The kitchen was the largest room in the house; Nils remembered that his older brothers used to give dances there when he was a boy. Beside the stove stood a little girl with two light yellow braids and a broad, flushed face, peering anxiously into a frying-pan. In the dining-room beyond, a large, broad-shouldered woman was moving about the table. She walked with an active, springy step. Her face was heavy and florid, almost without wrinkles, and her hair was black at seventy. Nils felt proud of her as he watched her deliberate activity; never a momentary hesitation, or a movement that did not tell. He waited until she came out into the kitchen and, brushing the child aside, took her place at the stove. Then he tapped on the screen door and entered.

"It's nobody but Nils, Mother. I expect you weren't looking for me."

Mrs. Ericson turned away from the stove and stood staring at him. "Bring the lamp, Hilda, and let me look."

Nils laughed and unslung his valise. "What's the matter, Mother? Don't you know me?"

Mrs. Ericson put down the lamp. "You must be Nils. You don't look very different, anyway."

"Nor you, Mother. You hold your own. Don't you wear glasses yet?"

"Only to read by. Where's your trunk, Nils?"

"Oh, I left that in town. I thought it might not be convenient for you to have company so near threshing-time."

"Don't be foolish, Nils." Mrs. Ericson turned back to the stove. "I don't thresh now. I hitched the wheat land onto the next farm and have a tenant. Hilda, take some hot water up to the company room, and go call little Eric."

The tow-haired child, who had been standing in mute amazement, took up the tea-kettle and withdrew, giving Nils a long, admiring look from the door of the kitchen stairs.

"Who's the youngster?" Nils asked, dropping down on the bench behind the kitchen stove.

"One of your Cousin Henrik's."

"How long has Cousin Henrik been dead?"

"Six years. There are two boys. One stays with Peter and one with Anders. Olaf is their guardeen."

There was a clatter of pails on the porch, and a tall, lanky boy peered wonderingly in through the screen door. He had a fair, gentle face and big gray eyes, and wisps of soft yellow hair hung down under his cap. Nils sprang up and pulled him into the kitchen, hugging him and slapping him on the shoulders. "Well, if it isn't my kid! Look at the size of him! Don't you know me, Eric?"

The boy reddened under his sunburn and freckles, and hung his head. "I guess it's Nils," he said shyly.

"You're a good guesser," laughed Nils, giving the lad's hand a swing. To himself he was thinking: "That's why the little girl looked so friendly. He's taught her to like me. He was only six when I went away, and he's remembered for twelve years."

Eric stood fumbling with his cap and smiling. "You look just like I thought you would," he ventured.

"Go wash your hands, Eric," called Mrs. Ericson. "I've got cob corn for supper, Nils. You used to like it. I guess you don't get much of that in the old country. Here's Hilda; she'll take you up to your room. You'll want to get the dust off you before you eat."

Mrs. Ericson went into the dining-room to lay another plate, and the little girl came up and nodded to Nils as if to let him know that his room was ready. He put out his hand and she took it, with a startled glance up at his face. Little Eric dropped his towel, threw an arm about Nils and one about Hilda, gave them a clumsy squeeze, and then stumbled out to the porch.

During supper Nils heard exactly how much land each of his eight grown brothers farmed, how their crops were coming on, and how much live stock they were feeding. His mother watched him narrowly as she talked. "You've got better looking, Nils," she remarked abruptly, whereupon he grinned and the children giggled. Eric, although he was eighteen and as tall as Nils, was always accounted a child, being the last of so many sons. His face seemed childlike, too, Nils thought, and he had the open, wandering eyes of a little boy. All the others had been men at his age.

After supper Nils went out to the front porch and sat down on the step to smoke a pipe. Mrs. Ericson drew a rocking-chair up near him and began to knit busily. It was one of the few old-world customs she had kept up, for she could not bear to sit with idle hands.

"Where's little Eric, Mother?"

"He's helping Hilda with the dishes. He does it of his own will; I don't like a boy to be too handy about the house."

"He seems like a nice kid."

"He's very obedient."

Nils smiled a little in the dark. It was just as well to shift the line of conversation. "What are you knitting there, Mother?"

"Baby stockings. The boys keep me busy." Mrs. Ericson chuckled and clicked her needles.

"How many grandchildren have you?"

"Only thirty-one now. Olaf lost his three. They were sickly, like their mother."

"I supposed he had a second crop by this time!"

"His second wife has no children. She's too proud. She tears about on horseback all the time. But she'll get caught up with, yet. She sets herself very high, though nobody knows what for. They were low enough Bohemians she came of. I never thought much of Bohemians; always drinking."

Nils puffed away at his pipe in silence, and Mrs. Ericson knitted on. In a few moments she added grimly: "She was down here to-night, just before you came. She'd like to quarrel with me and come between me and Olaf, but I don't give her the chance. I suppose you'll be bringing a wife home some day."

"I don't know. I've never thought much about it."

"Well, perhaps it's best as it is," suggested Mrs. Ericson hopefully. "You'd never be contented tied down to the land. There was roving blood in your father's family, and it's come out in you. I expect your own way of life suits you best." Mrs. Ericson had dropped into a blandly agreeable tone which Nils well remembered. It seemed to amuse him a good deal and his white teeth flashed behind his pipe. His mother's strategies had always diverted him, even when he was a boy — they were so flimsy and patent, so illy proportioned to her vigor and force. "They've been waiting to see which way I'd jump," he reflected. He felt that Mrs. Ericson was pondering his case deeply as she sat clicking her needles.

"I don't suppose you've ever got used to steady work," she went on presently. "Men ain't apt to if they roam around too long. It's a pity you didn't come back the year after the World's Fair. Your father picked up a good bit of land cheap then, in the hard times, and I expect maybe he'd have give you a farm. It's too bad you put off comin' back so long, for I always thought he meant to do something by you."

Nils laughed and shook the ashes out of his pipe. "I'd have missed a lot if I had come back then. But I'm sorry I didn't get back to see father."

"Well, I suppose we have to miss things at one end or the other. Perhaps you are as well satisfied with your own doings, now, as you'd have been with a farm," said Mrs. Ericson reassuringly.

"Land's a good thing to have," Nils commented, as he lit another match and sheltered it with his hand.

His mother looked sharply at his face until the match burned out. "Only when you stay on it!" she hastened to say.

Eric came round the house by the path just then, and Nils rose, with a yawn. "Mother, if you don't mind, Eric and I will take a little tramp before bed-time. It will make me sleep."

"Very well; only don't stay long. I'll sit up and wait for you. I like to lock up myself."

Nils put his hand on Eric's shoulder, and the two tramped down the hill and across the sand creek into the dusty highroad beyond. Neither spoke. They swung along at an even gait, Nils puffing at his pipe. There was no moon, and the white road and the wide fields lay faint in the starlight. Over everything was darkness and thick silence, and the smell of dust and sunflowers. The brothers followed the road for a mile or more without finding a place to sit down. Finally Nils perched on a stile over the wire fence, and Eric sat on the lower step.

"I began to think you never would come back, Nils," said the boy softly.

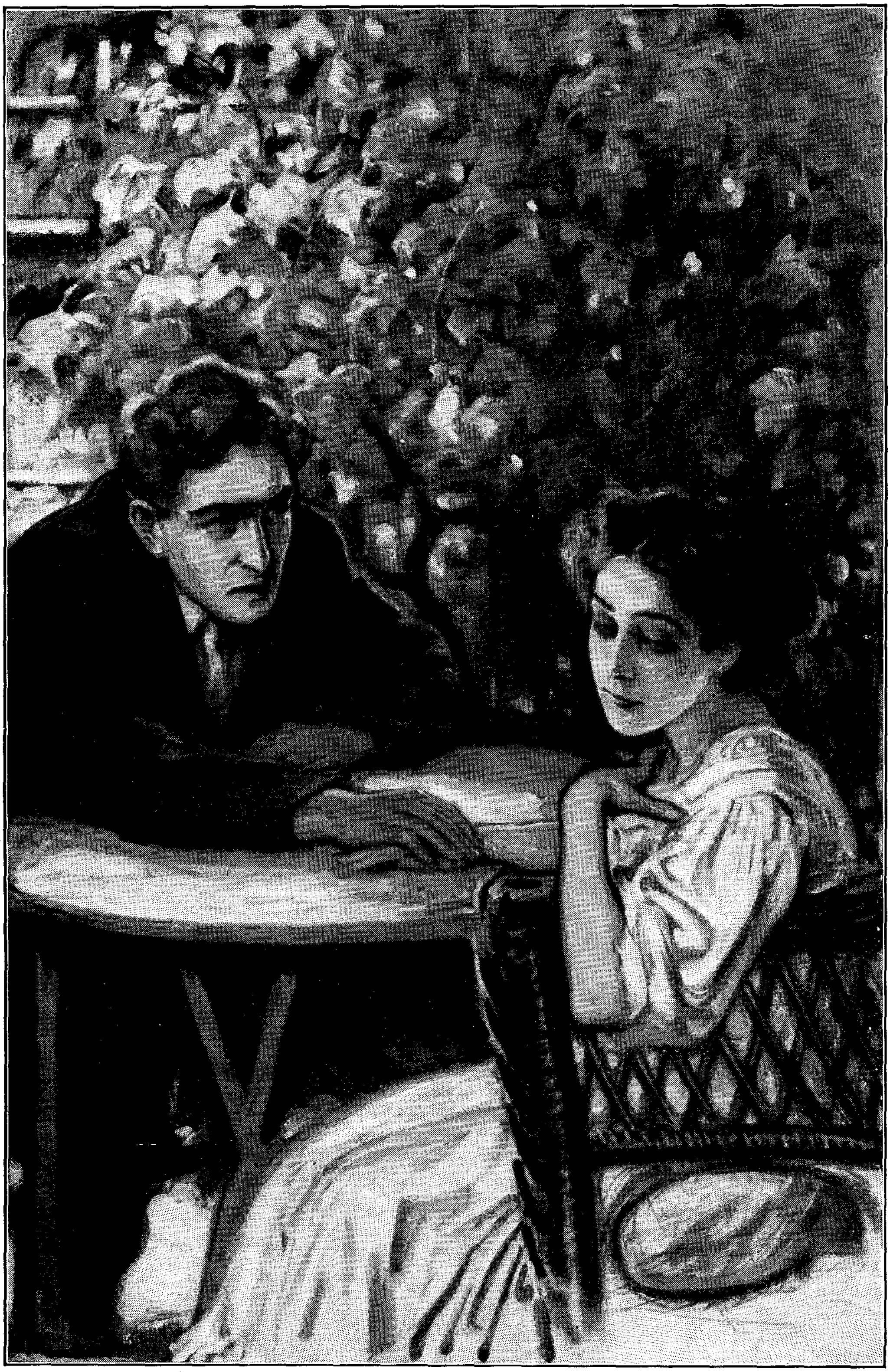
"Didn't I promise you I would?"

"Yes; but people don't bother about promises they make to babies. Did you really know you were going away for good when you went to Chicago with the cattle that time?"

"I thought it very likely, if I could make my way."

"I don't see how you did it, Nils. Not many fellows could." Eric rubbed his shoulder against his brother's knee.

"The hard thing was leaving home — you and father. It was easy enough, once I got beyond Chicago. Of course I got awful homesick;



"NILS' STEADY GAZE STILL BEAT UPON HER. HE REACHED HIS HAND ACROSS THE TABLE AND DROPPED IT ON CLARA'S, WHICH WAS COLD AS AN ICICLE. 'LAST CALL FOR PLAY, MRS. ERICSON!'"

used to cry myself to sleep. But I'd burned my bridges."

"You had always wanted to go, hadn't you?"

"Always. Do you still sleep in our little room? Is that cottonwood still by the window?"

Eric nodded eagerly and smiled up at his brother in the gray darkness.

"You remember how we always said the leaves were whispering when they rustled at night? Well, they always whispered to me about the sea. Sometimes they said names out of the geography books. In a high wind they had a desperate sound, like something trying to tear loose."

"How funny, Nils," said Eric dreamily, resting his chin on his hand. "That tree still talks like that, and 'most always it talks to me about you."

They sat a while longer, watching the stars. At last Eric whispered anxiously: "Hadn't we better go back now? Mother will get tired waiting for us." They rose and took a short cut home, through the pasture.

II

The next morning Nils woke with the first flood of light that came with dawn. The white-plastered walls of his room reflected the glare that shone through the thin window-shades, and he found it impossible to sleep. He dressed hurriedly and slipped down the hall and up the back stairs to the half-story room which he used to share with his little brother. Eric, in a skimpy night-shirt, was sitting on the edge of the bed, rubbing his eyes, his pale yellow hair standing up in tufts all over his head. When he saw Nils, he murmured something confusedly and hustled his long legs into his trousers. "I didn't expect you'd be up so early, Nils," he said, as his head emerged from his blue shirt.

"Oh, you thought I was a dude, did you?" Nils gave him a playful tap which bent the tall boy up like a clasp-knife. "See here; I must teach you to box." Nils thrust his hands into his pockets and walked about. "You haven't changed things much up here. Got most of my old traps, haven't you?"

He took down a bent, withered piece of sapling that hung over the dresser. "If this isn't the stick Lou Sandberg killed himself with!"

The boy looked up from his shoe-lacing.

"Yes; you never used to let me play with that. Just how did he do it, Nils? You were with father when he found Lou, weren't you?"

"Yes. Father was going off to preach somewhere, and, as we drove along, Lou's place looked sort of forlorn, and we thought we'd stop and cheer him up. When we found him father said he'd been dead a couple days. He'd tied a piece of binding twine round his neck, made a noose in each end, fixed the nooses over the ends of a bent stick, and let the stick spring straight; strangled himself."

"What made him kill himself such a silly way?"

The simplicity of the boy's question set Nils laughing. He clapped little Eric on the shoulder. "What made him such a silly as to kill himself at all, I should say!"

"Oh, well! But his hogs had the cholera, and all up and died on him, didn't they?"

"Sure they did; but he didn't have cholera; and there were plenty of hogs left in the world, weren't there?"

"Well, but, if they weren't his, how could they do him any good?" Eric asked, in astonishment.

"Oh, scat! He could have had lots of fun with other people's hogs. He was a chump, Lou Sandberg. To kill yourself for a pig — think of that, now!" Nils laughed all the way downstairs, and quite embarrassed little Eric, who fell to scrubbing his face and hands at the tin basin. While he was parting his wet hair at the kitchen looking-glass, a heavy tread sounded on the stairs. The boy dropped his comb. "Gracious, there's Mother. We must have talked too long." He hurried out to the shed, slipped on his overalls, and disappeared with the milking-pails.

Mrs. Ericson came in, wearing a clean white apron, her black hair shining from the application of a wet brush.

"Good morning, Mother. Can't I make the fire for you?"

"No, thank you, Nils. It's no trouble to make a cob fire, and I like to manage the kitchen stove myself." Mrs. Ericson paused with a shovel full of ashes in her hand. "I expect you will be wanting to see your brothers as soon as possible. I'll take you up to Anders' place this morning. He's threshing, and most of our boys are over there."

"Will Olaf be there?"

Mrs. Ericson went on taking out the ashes, and spoke between shovels. "No; Olaf's wheat is all in, put away in his new barn. He got six thousand bushel this year. He's going to town to-day to get men to finish roofing his barn."

"So Olaf is building a new barn?" Nils asked absently.

"Biggest one in the county, and almost done. You'll likely be here for the barn-raising. He's going to have a supper and a dance as soon as everybody's done threshing. Says it keeps the voters in a good humor. I tell him that's all nonsense; but Olaf has a long head for politics."

"Does Olaf farm all Cousin Henrik's land?"

Mrs. Ericson frowned as she blew into the faint smoke curling up about the cobs. "Yes; he holds it in trust for the children, Hilda and her brothers. He keeps strict account of everything he raises on it, and puts the proceeds out at compound interest for them."

Nils smiled as he watched the little flames shoot up. The door of the back stairs opened, and Hilda emerged, her arms behind her, buttoning up her long gingham apron as she came. He nodded to her gaily, and she twinkled at him out of her little blue eyes, set far apart over her wide cheek-bones.

"There, Hilda, you grind the coffee — and just put in an extra handful; I expect your Cousin Nils likes his strong," said Mrs. Ericson, as she went out to the shed.

Nils turned to look at the little girl, who gripped the coffee-grinder between her knees and ground so hard that her two braids bobbed and her face flushed under its broad spattering of freckles. He noticed on her middle finger something that had not been there last night, and that had evidently been put on for company: a tiny gold ring with a clumsily set garnet stone. As her hand went round and round he touched the ring with the tip of his finger, smiling.

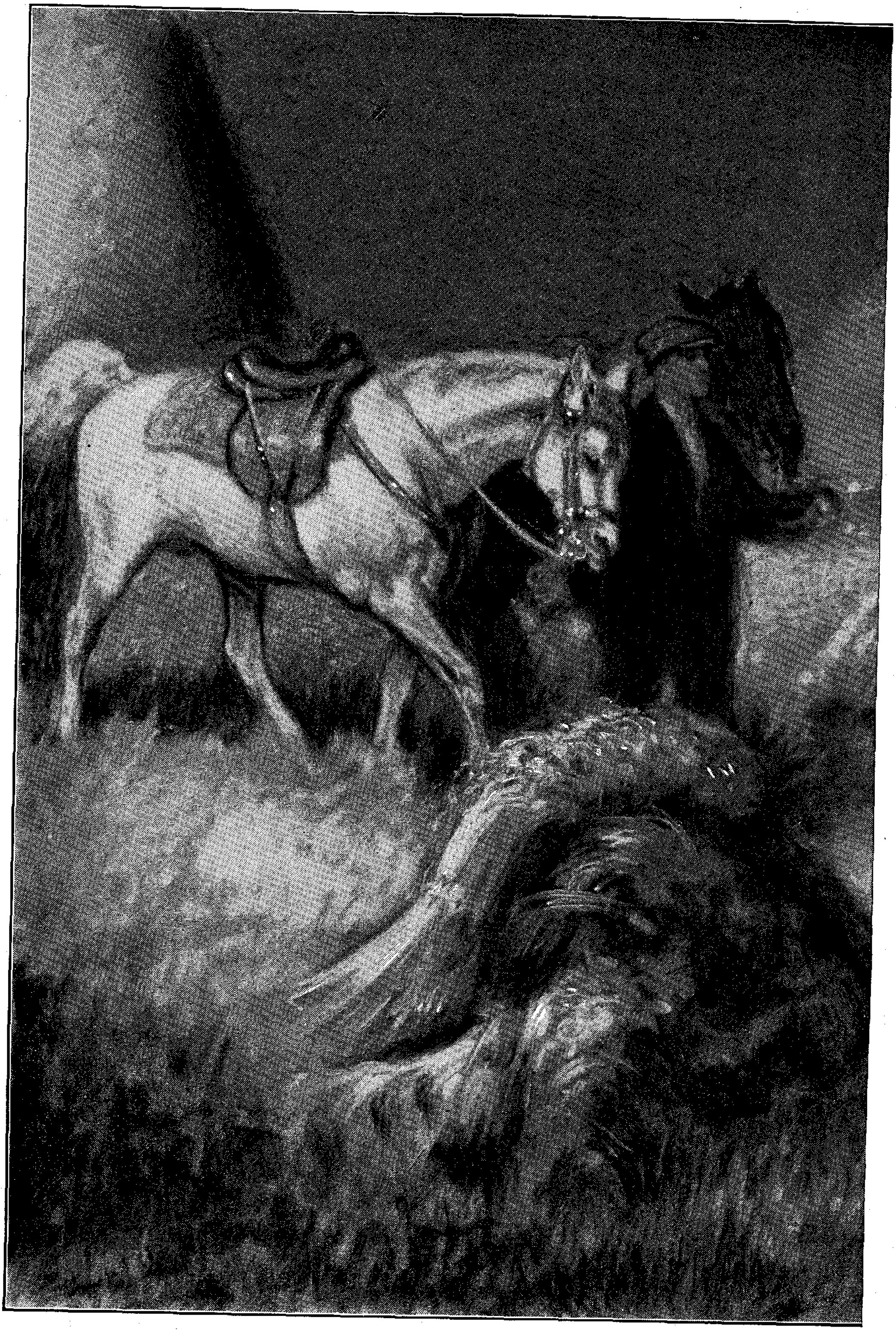
Hilda glanced toward the shed door through which Mrs. Ericson had disappeared. "My Cousin Clara gave me that," she whispered bashfully. "She's Cousin Olaf's wife."

III

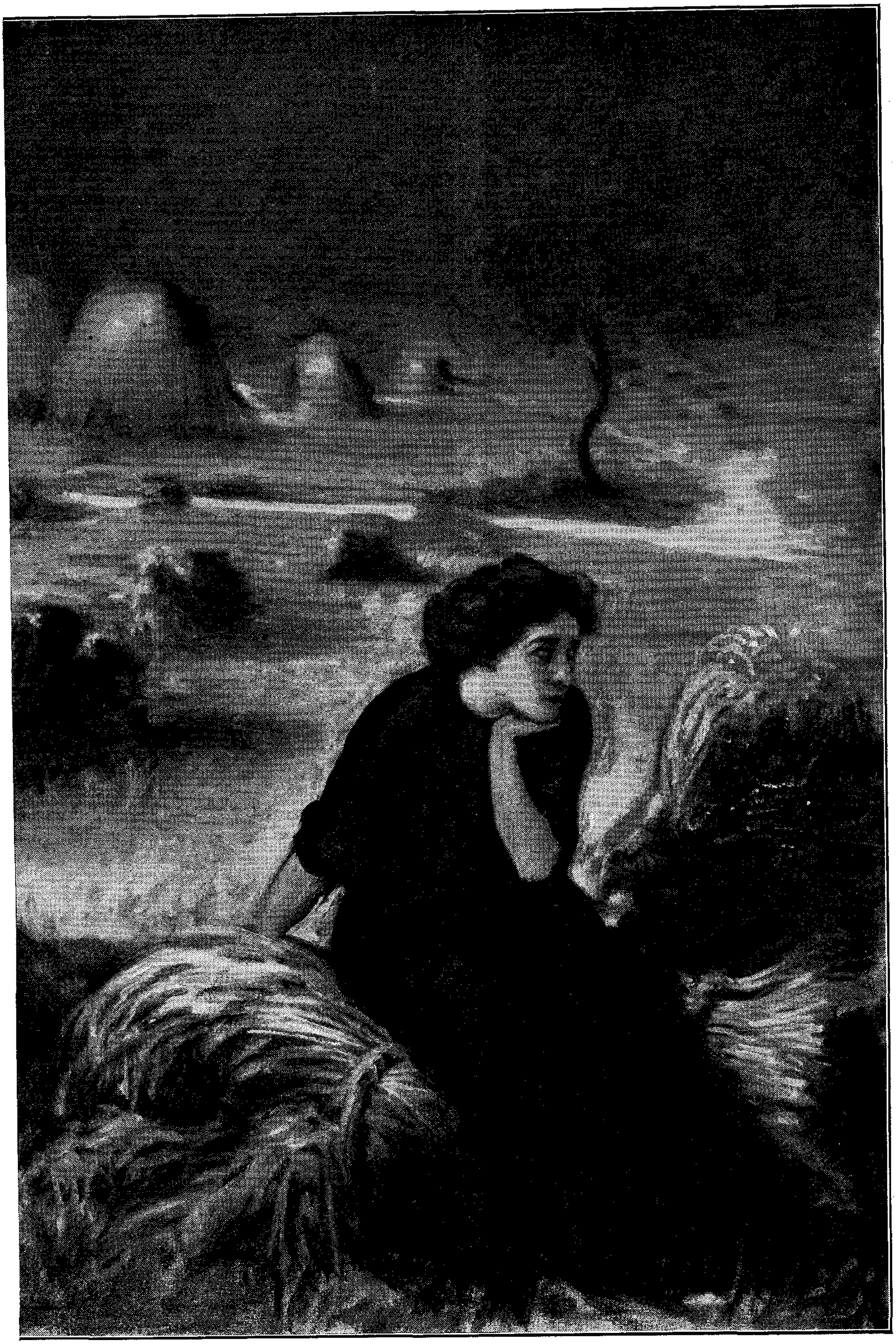
Mrs. Olaf Ericson — Clara Vavrika, as many people still called her — was moving restlessly about her big bare house that morning. Her husband had left for the county town before his wife was out of bed — her lateness in rising was one of the many things the Ericson family had against her. Clara seldom came downstairs before eight o'clock, and this morning she was even later, for she had dressed with unusual care. She put on, however, only a tight-fitting black dress, which people thereabouts thought very plain. She was a tall, dark woman of thirty, with a rather sallow complexion and a touch of dull salmon red in her cheeks, where the blood seemed to burn under her brown skin. Her hair, parted evenly above her low forehead, was so black that there were distinctly blue lights in it. Her black eyebrows were delicate half-moons and her lashes were long and heavy. Her eyes slanted a little, as if she had a strain of Tartar or gypsy blood, and were sometimes full of fiery determination and sometimes dull and opaque. Her expression was never altogether amiable; was often, indeed, distinctly sullen, or, when she was animated, sarcastic. She was most attractive in profile, for then one saw to advantage her small, well-shaped head and delicate ears, and felt at once that here was a very positive, if not an altogether pleasing, personality.

The entire management of Mrs. Olaf's household devolved upon her aunt, Johanna Vavrika, a superstitious, doting woman of fifty. When Clara was a little girl her mother died, and Johanna's life had been spent in ungrudging service to her niece. Clara, like many self-willed and discontented persons, was really very apt, without knowing it, to do as other people told her, and to let her destiny be decided for her by intelligences much below her own. It was her Aunt Johanna who had humored and spoiled her in her girlhood, who had got her off to Chicago to study piano, and who had finally persuaded her to marry Olaf Ericson as the best match she would be likely to make in that part of the country. Johanna Vavrika had been deeply scarred by smallpox in the old country. She was short and fat, homely and jolly and sentimental. She was so broad, and took such short steps when she walked, that her brother, Joe Vavrika, always called her his duck. She adored her niece because of her talent, because of her good looks and masterful ways, but most of all because of her selfishness.

Clara's marriage with Olaf Ericson was Johanna's particular triumph. She was inordinately proud of Olaf's position, and she found a sufficiently exciting career in managing Clara's house, in keeping it above the criticism of the Ericsons, in pampering Olaf to keep him from finding fault with his wife, and in concealing from every one Clara's domestic infelicities. While Clara slept of a morning, Johanna Vavrika was bustling about, seeing that Olaf and the men had their breakfast, and that the cleaning or the butter-making or the washing was properly begun by the two girls in the kitchen. Then, at about eight o'clock, she would take Clara's coffee up to her, and chat with her while she drank it, telling her what was going on in the house. Old Mrs. Ericson frequently said that her daughter-in-law would not know what day of the week it was if Johanna did not tell her every morning. Mrs. Ericson despised and pitied Johanna, but did not wholly dislike her. The one thing she hated in her daughter-in-law above everything else was the way in which Clara could come it over people. It enraged her that the affairs of her son's big, barnlike house went on as well as they did, and she used to feel that in this world we have to wait over-long to see the guilty punished. "Suppose Johanna Vavrika died or got sick?" the old lady used to say to Olaf. "Your wife wouldn't know where to look for her own dish-cloth." Olaf only shrugged his shoulders. The fact remained that



"CLARA SANK DOWN ON A SHEAF OF WHEAT. SHE DID NOT KNOW WHAT SHE WAS GOING TO DO—HER. BEHIND HER SHE HEARD THE TRAMPING OF HORSES. 'WE SHALL HAVE TO



WHETHER SHE WOULD GO OR STAY. THE GREAT SILENT COUNTRY SEEMED TO LAY A SPELL ON
RIDE FAST TO CATCH THE MIDNIGHT TRAIN. A LAST GALLOP, CLARA VAVRIKA!'"

Johanna did not die, and, although Mrs. Ericson often told her she was looking poorly, she was never ill. She seldom left the house, and she slept in a little room off the kitchen. No Ericson, by night or day, could come prying about there to find fault without her knowing it. Her one weakness was that she was an incurable talker, and she sometimes made trouble without meaning to.

This morning Clara was tying a wine-colored ribbon about her throat when Johanna appeared with her coffee. After putting the tray on a sewing-table, she began to make Clara's bed, chattering the while in Bohemian.

"Well, Olaf got off early, and the girls are baking. I'm going down presently to make some poppy-seed bread for Olaf. He asked for prune preserves at breakfast, and I told him I was out of them, and to bring some prunes and honey and cloves from town."

Clara poured her coffee. "Ugh! I don't see how men can eat so much sweet stuff. In the morning, too!"

Her aunt chuckled knowingly. "Bait a bear with honey, as we say in the old country."

"Was he cross?" her niece asked indifferently.

"Olaf? Oh, no! He was in fine spirits. He's never cross if you know how to take him. I never knew a man to make so little fuss about bills. I gave him a list of things to get a yard long, and he didn't say a word; just folded it up and put it in his pocket."

"I can well believe he didn't say a word," Clara remarked with a shrug. "Some day he'll forget how to talk."

"Oh, but they say he's a grand speaker in the Legislature. He knows when to keep quiet. That's why he's got such influence in politics. The people have confidence in him." Johanna beat up a pillow and held it under her fat chin while she slipped on the case. Her niece laughed.

"Maybe we could make people believe we were wise, Aunty, if we held our tongues. Why did you tell Mrs. Ericson that Norman threw me again last Saturday and turned my foot? She's been talking to Olaf."

Johanna fell into great confusion. "Oh, but, my precious, the old lady asked for you, and she's always so angry if I can't give an excuse. Anyhow, she needn't talk; she's always tearing up something with that motor of hers."

When her aunt clattered down to the kitchen, Clara went to dust the parlor. Since there was not much there to dust, this did not take very long. Olaf had built the house new for her before their marriage, but her interest in furnishing it had been short-lived. It went, indeed, little beyond a bath-tub and her piano. They had disagreed about almost every other article of furniture, and Clara had said she would rather have her house empty than full of things she didn't want. The house was set in a hillside, and the west windows of the parlor looked out above the kitchen yard thirty feet below. The east windows opened directly into the front yard. At one of the latter, Clara, while she was dusting, heard a low whistle. She did not turn at once, but listened intently as she drew her cloth slowly along the round of a chair. Yes, there it was:

"I dreamt that I dwelt in ma-a-arble halls,"

She turned and saw Nils Ericson laughing in the sunlight, his hat in his hand, just outside the window. As she crossed the room he leaned against the wire screen. "Aren't you at all surprised to see me, Clara Vavrika?"

"No; I was expecting to see you. Mother Ericson telephoned Olaf last night that you were here."

Nils squinted and gave a long whistle. "Telephoned? That must have been while Eric and I were out walking. Isn't she enterprising? Lift this screen, won't you?"

Clara lifted the screen, and Nils swung his leg across the window-sill. As he stepped into the room she said: "You didn't think you were going to get ahead of your mother, did you?"

He threw his hat on the piano. "Oh, I do sometimes. You see, I'm ahead of her now. I'm supposed to be in Anders' wheat-field. But, as we were leaving, Mother ran her car into a soft place beside the road and sank up to the hubs. While they were going for horses to pull her out, I cut away behind the stacks and escaped." Nils chuckled. Clara's dull eyes lit up as she looked at him admiringly.

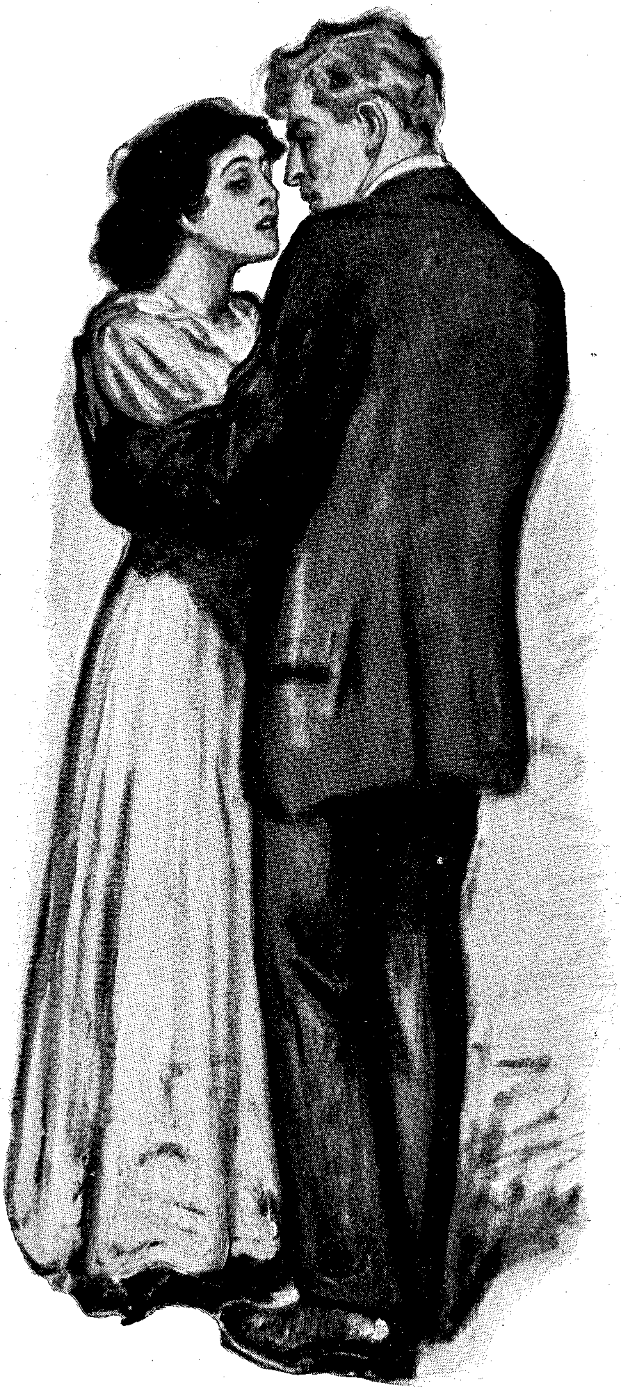
"You've got them guessing already. I don't know what your mother said to Olaf over the telephone, but he came back looking as if he'd seen a ghost, and he didn't go to bed until a dreadful hour — ten o'clock, I should think. He sat out on the porch in the dark like a graven image. It had been one of his talkative days, too." They both laughed, easily and lightly, like people who have laughed a great deal together; but they remained standing.

"Anders and Otto and Peter looked as if they had seen ghosts, too, over in the threshing-field. What's the matter with them all?"

Clara gave him a quick, searching look. "Well, for one thing, they've always been afraid you have the other will."

Nils looked interested. "The other will?"

"Yes. A later one. They knew your father made another, but they never knew what he did with it. They almost tore the old house



"'OH, BUT YOU'RE THE REAL BOHEMIAN GIRL, CLARA VAVRIKA,' NILS LAUGHED DOWN AT HER. 'THEY'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER US AS WE'RE DANCING TOGETHER TO-NIGHT'" to pieces looking for it. They always suspected that he carried on a clandestine correspondence with you, for the one thing he would do was to get his own mail himself. So they thought he might have sent the new will to you for safe-keeping. The old one, leaving everything to your mother, was made long before you went away, and it's understood among them that it cuts you out — that she will leave all the property to the others. Your father made the second will to prevent that. I've been hoping you had it. It would be such fun to spring it on them." Clara laughed mirthfully, a thing she did not often do now.

Nils shook his head reprovingly. "Come, now, you're malicious."

"No, I'm not. But I'd like something to happen to stir them all up, just for once. There never was such a family for having nothing ever happen to them but dinner and threshing. I'd almost be willing to die, just to have a funeral. *You* wouldn't stand it for three weeks."

Nils bent over the piano and began pecking at the keys with the finger of one hand. "I wouldn't? My dear young lady, how do you know what I can stand? *You* wouldn't wait to find out."

Clara flushed darkly and frowned. "I didn't believe you would ever come back—" she said defiantly.

"Eric believed I would, and he was only a baby when I went away. However, all's well that ends well, and I haven't come back to be a skeleton at the feast. We mustn't quarrel. Mother will be here with a search-warrant pretty soon." He swung round and faced her, thrusting his hands into his coat pockets. "Come, you ought to be glad to see me, if you want something to happen. I'm something, even without a will. We can have a little fun, can't we? I think we can!"

She echoed him, "I think we can!" They both laughed and their eyes sparkled. Clara Vavrika looked ten years younger than when she had put the velvet ribbon about her throat that morning.

"You know, I'm so tickled to see mother," Nils went on. "I didn't know I was so proud of her. A regular pile-driver. How about little pigtails, down at the house? Is Olaf doing the square thing by those children?"

Clara frowned pensively. "Olaf has to do something that looks like the square thing, now that he's a public man!" She glanced drolly at Nils. "But he makes a good commission out of it. On Sundays they all get together here and figure. He lets Peter and Anders put in big bills for the keep of the two boys, and he pays them out of the estate. They are always having what they call accountings. Olaf gets something out of it, too. I don't know just how they do it, but it's entirely a family matter, as they say. And when the Ericsons say that —" Clara lifted her eyebrows.

Just then the angry *honk-honk* of an approaching motor sounded from down the road. Their eyes met and they began to laugh. They laughed as children do when they can not contain themselves, and can not explain the cause of their mirth to grown people, but share it perfectly together. When Clara Vavrika sat down at the piano after he was gone, she felt that she had laughed away a dozen years. She practised as if the house were burning over her head.

When Nils greeted his mother and climbed into the front seat of the motor beside her, Mrs. Ericson looked grim, but she made no comment upon his truancy until she had turned her car and was retracing her revolutions along the road that ran by Olaf's big pasture. Then she remarked dryly:

"If I were you I wouldn't see too much of Olaf's wife while you are here. She's the kind of woman who can't see much of men without getting herself talked about. She was a good deal talked about before he married her."

"Hasn't Olaf tamed her?" Nils asked indifferently.

Mrs. Ericson shrugged her massive shoulders. "Olaf don't seem to have much luck, when it comes to wives. The first one was meek enough, but she was always ailing. And this one has her own way. He says if he quarreled with her she'd go back to her father, and then he'd lose the Bohemian vote. There are a great many Bokunks in this district. But when you find a man under his wife's thumb you can always be sure there's a soft spot in him somewhere."

Nils thought of his own father, and smiled. "She brought him a good deal of money, didn't she, besides the Bohemian vote?"

Mrs. Ericson sniffed. "Well, she has a fair half section in her own name, but I can't see as that does Olaf much good. She will have a good deal of property some day, if old Vavrika don't marry again. But I don't consider a saloonkeeper's money as good as other people's money."

Nils laughed outright. "Come, Mother, don't let your prejudices carry you that far. Money's money. Old Vavrika's a mighty decent sort of saloonkeeper. Nothing rowdy about him."

Mrs. Ericson spoke up angrily: "Oh, I know you always stood up for them! But hanging around there when you were a boy never did you any good, Nils, nor any of the other boys who went there. There weren't so many after her when she married Olaf, let me tell you. She knew enough to grab her chance."

Nils settled back in his seat. "Of course I liked to go there, Mother, and you were always cross about it. You never took the trouble to find out that it was the one jolly house in this country for a boy to go to. All the rest of you were working yourselves to death, and the houses were mostly a mess, full of babies and washing and flies. Oh, it was all right — I understand that; but you are young only once, and I happened to be young then. Now, Vavrika's was always jolly. He played the violin, and I used to take my flute, and Clara played the piano, and Johanna used to sing Bohemian songs. She always had a big supper for us — herrings and pickles and poppy-seed bread, and lots of cake and preserves. Old Joe had been in the army in the old country, and he could tell lots of good stories. I can see him cutting bread, at the head of the table, now. I don't know what I'd have done when I was a kid if it hadn't been for the Vavrikas, really."

"And all the time he was taking money that other people had worked hard in the fields for," Mrs. Ericson observed.

"So do the circuses, Mother, and they're a good thing. People ought to get fun for some of their money. Even father liked old Joe."

"Your father," Mrs. Ericson said grimly, "liked everybody."

As they crossed the sand creek and turned into her own place, Mrs. Ericson observed, "There's Olaf's buggy. He's stopped on his way from town." Nils shook himself and prepared to greet his brother, who was waiting on the porch.

Olaf was a big, heavy Norwegian, slow of speech and movement. His head was large and square, like a block of wood. When Nils, at a distance, tried to remember what his brother looked like, he could recall only his heavy head, high forehead, large nostrils, and pale-blue eyes, set far apart. Olaf's features were rudimentary: the thing one noticed was the face itself, wide and flat and pale, devoid of any expression, betraying his fifty years as little as it betrayed anything else, and powerful by reason of its very stolidness. When Olaf shook hands with Nils he looked at him from under his light eyebrows, but Nils felt that no one could ever say what that pale look might mean. The one thing he had always felt in Olaf was a heavy stubbornness, like the unyielding stickiness of wet loam against the plow. He had always found Olaf the most difficult of his brothers.

"How do you do, Nils? Expect to stay with us long?"

"Oh, I may stay forever," Nils answered gaily. "I like this country better than I used to."

"There's been some work put into it since you left," Olaf remarked.

"Exactly. I think it's about ready to live in now — and I'm about ready to settle down." Nils saw his brother lower his big head. ("Exactly like a bull," he thought.) "Mother's been persuading me to slow down now, and go in for farming," he went on lightly.

Olaf made a deep sound in his throat. "Farming ain't learned in a day," he brought out, still looking at the ground.

"Oh, I know! But I pick things up quickly." Nils had not meant to antagonize his brother, and he did not know now why he was doing it. "Of course," he went on, "I shouldn't expect to make a big success, as you fellows have done. But then, I'm not ambitious. I won't want much. A little land, and some cattle, maybe."

Olaf still stared at the ground, his head down. He wanted to ask Nils what he had been doing all these years, that he didn't have a business somewhere he couldn't afford to leave; why he hadn't more pride than to come back with only a little sole-leather trunk to show for himself, and to present himself as the only failure in the family. He did not ask one of these questions, but he made them all felt distinctly.

"Humph!" Nils thought. "No wonder the man never talks, when he can butt his ideas into you like that without ever saying a word. I suppose he uses that kind of smokeless powder on his wife all the time. But I guess she has her innings." He chuckled, and Olaf looked up. "Never mind me, Olaf. I laugh without knowing why, like little Eric. He's another cheerful dog."

"Eric," said Olaf slowly, "is a spoiled kid. He's just let his mother's best cow go dry because he don't milk her right. I was hoping you'd take him away somewhere and put him into business. If he don't do any good among strangers, he never will." This was a long speech for Olaf, and as he finished it he climbed into his buggy.

Nils shrugged his shoulders. "Same old tricks," he thought. "Hits from behind you every time. What a whale of a man!" He turned and went round to the kitchen, where his mother was scolding little Eric for letting the gasoline get low.

IV

Joe Vavrika's saloon was not in the county-seat, where Olaf and Mrs. Ericson did their trading, but in a cheerfuller place, a little Bohemian settlement which lay at the other end of the county, ten level miles north of Olaf's farm. Clara rode up to see her father almost every day. Vavrika's house was, so to speak, in the back yard of his saloon. The garden between the two buildings was inclosed by a high board fence as tight as a partition, and in summer Joe kept beer-tables and wooden benches among the gooseberry bushes under his little cherry tree. At one of these tables Nils Ericson was seated in the late afternoon, three days after his return home. Joe had gone in to serve a customer, and Nils was lounging on his elbows, looking rather mournfully into his half-emptied pitcher, when he heard a laugh across the little garden. Clara, in her riding-habit, was standing at the back door of the house, under the grapevine trellis that old Joe had grown there long ago. Nils rose.

"Come out and keep your father and me company. We've been gossiping all afternoon. Nobody to bother us but the flies."

She shook her head. "No, I never come out here any more. Olaf doesn't like it. I must live up to my position, you know."

"You mean to tell me you never come out and chat with the boys, as you used to? He *has* tamed you! Who keeps up these flower-beds?"

"I come out on Sundays, when father is alone, and read the Bohemian papers to him. But I am never here when the bar is open. What have you two been doing?"

"Talking, as I told you. I've been telling him about my travels. I find I can't talk much at home, not even to Eric."

Clara reached up and poked with her riding-whip at a white moth that was fluttering in the sunlight among the vine leaves. "I suppose you will never tell me about all those things."

"Where can I tell them? Not in Olaf's house, certainly. What's the matter with our talking here?" He pointed persuasively with his hat to the bushes and the green table, where the flies were singing lazily above the empty beer-glasses.

Clara shook her head weakly. "No, it wouldn't do. Besides, I am going now."

"I'm on Eric's mare. Would you be angry if I overtook you?"

Clara looked back and laughed. "You might try and see. I can leave you if I don't want you. Eric's mare can't keep up with Norman."

Nils went into the bar and attempted to pay his score. Big Joe, six feet four, with curly yellow hair and mustache, clapped him on the shoulder. "Not a God-damn a your money go in my drawer, you hear? Only next time you bring your flute, te-te-te-te-te-ty." Joe wagged his fingers in imitation of the flute-player's position. "My Clara, she come all-a-time Sundays an' play for me. She not like to play at Ericson's place." He shook his yellow curls and laughed. "Not a God-damn a fun at Ericson's. You come a Sunday. You like-a fun. No forget de flute." Joe talked very rapidly and always tumbled over his English. He seldom spoke it to his customers, and had never learned much.

Nils swung himself into the saddle and trotted to the west end of the village, where the houses and gardens scattered into prairie-land and the road turned south. Far ahead of him, in the declining light, he saw Clara Vavrika's slender figure, loitering on horseback. He touched his mare with the whip, and shot along the white, level road, under the reddening sky. When he overtook Olaf's wife he saw that she had been crying. "What's the matter, Clara Vavrika?" he asked kindly.

"Oh, I get blue sometimes. It was awfully jolly living there with father. I wonder why I ever went away."

Nils spoke in a low, kind tone that he sometimes used with women: "That's what I've been wondering these many years. You were the last girl in the country I'd have picked for a wife for Olaf. What made you do it, Clara?"

"I suppose I really did it to oblige the neighbors"—Clara tossed her head. "People were beginning to wonder."

"To wonder?"

"Yes—why I didn't get married. I suppose I didn't like to keep them in suspense. I've discovered that most girls marry out of consideration for the neighborhood."

Nils bent his head toward her and his white teeth flashed. "I'd have gambled that one girl I knew would say, 'Let the neighborhood be damned.'"

Clara shook her head mournfully. "You see, they have it on you, Nils; that is, if you're a woman. They say you're beginning to go off. That's what makes us get married: we can't stand the laugh."

Nils looked sidewise at her. He had never seen her head droop before. Resignation was the last thing he would have expected of her. "In your case, there wasn't something else?"

"Something else?"

"I mean, you didn't do it to spite somebody? Somebody who didn't come back?"

Clara drew herself up. "Oh, I never thought you'd come back. Not after I stopped writing to you, at least. *That* was all over, long before I married Olaf."

"It never occurred to you, then, that the meanest thing you could do to me was to marry Olaf?"

Clara laughed. "No; I didn't know you were so fond of Olaf."

Nils smoothed his horse's mane with his glove. "You know, Clara Vavrika, you are never going to stick it out. You'll cut away some day, and I've been thinking you might as well cut away with me."

Clara threw up her chin. "Oh, you don't know me as well as you think. I won't cut away. Sometimes, when I'm with father, I feel like it. But I can hold out as long as the Ericsons can. They've never got the best of me yet, and one can live, so long as one isn't beaten. If I go back to father, it's all up with Olaf in politics. He knows that, and he never goes much beyond sulking. I've as much wit as the Ericsons. I'll never leave them unless I can show them a thing or two."

"You mean unless you can come it over them?"

"Yes — unless I go away with a man who is cleverer than they are, and who has more money."

Nils whistled. "Dear me, you are demanding a good deal. The Ericsons, take the lot of them, are a bunch to beat. But I should think the excitement of tormenting them would have worn off by this time."

"It has, I'm afraid," Clara admitted mournfully.

"Then why don't you cut away? There are more amusing games than this in the world. When I came home I thought it might amuse me to bully a few quarter sections out of the Ericsons; but I've almost decided I can get more fun for my money somewhere else."

Clara took in her breath sharply. "Ah, you have got the other will! That was why you came home!"

"No, it wasn't. I came home to see how you were getting on with Olaf."

Clara struck her horse with the whip, and in a bound she was far ahead of him. Nils dropped one word, "Damn!" and whipped after her; but she leaned forward in her saddle and fairly cut the wind. Her long riding-skirt rippled in the still air behind her. The sun was just sinking behind the stubble in a vast, clear sky, and the shadows drew across the fields so rapidly that Nils could scarcely keep in sight the dark figure on the road. When he overtook her he caught her horse by the bridle. Norman reared, and Nils was frightened for her; but Clara kept her seat.

"Let me go, Nils Ericson!" she cried. "I hate you more than any of them. You were created to torture me, the whole tribe of you — to make me suffer in every possible way."

She struck her horse again and galloped away from him. Nils set his teeth and looked thoughtful. He rode slowly home along the deserted road, watching the stars come out in the clear violet sky. They flashed softly into the limpid heavens, like jewels let fall into clear water. They were a reproach, he felt, to a sordid world. As he turned across the sand creek, he looked up at the North Star and smiled, as if there were an understanding between them. His mother scolded him for being late for supper.

V

On Sunday afternoon Joe Vavrika, in his shirt-sleeves and carpet-slippers, was sitting in his garden, smoking a long-tasseled porcelain pipe with a hunting scene painted on the bowl. Clara sat under the cherry tree, reading aloud to him from the weekly Bohemian papers. She had worn a white muslin dress under her riding-habit, and the leaves of the cherry tree threw a pattern of sharp shadows over her skirt. The black cat was dozing in the sunlight at her feet, and Joe's dachshund was scratching a hole under the scarlet geraniums and dreaming of badgers. Joe was filling his pipe for the third time since dinner, when he heard a knocking on the fence. He broke into a loud guffaw and unlatched the little door that led into the street. He did not call Nils by name, but caught him by the hand and dragged him in. Clara stiffened and the color deepened under her dark skin. Nils, too, felt a little awkward. He had not seen her since the night when she rode away from him and left him alone on the level road between the fields. Joe dragged him to the wooden bench beside the green table.

"You bring de flute," he cried, tapping the leather case under Nils' arm. "Ah, das-a good! Now we have some liddle fun like old times. I got somet'ing good for you." Joe shook his finger at Nils and winked his blue eye, a bright clear eye, full of fire, though the tiny blood-vessels on the ball were always a little distended. "I got somet'ing for you from"—he paused and waved his hand — "Hongarie. You know Hongarie? You wait!" He pushed Nils down on the bench, and went through the back door of his saloon.

Nils looked at Clara, who sat frigidly with her white skirts drawn tight about her. "He didn't tell you he had asked me to come, did he? He wanted a party and proceeded to arrange it. Isn't he fun? Don't be cross; let's give him a good time."

Clara smiled and shook out her skirt. "Isn't that like father? And he has sat here so meekly all day. Well, I won't pout. I'm glad you came. He doesn't have very many good times now any more. There are so few of his kind left. The second generation are a tame lot."

Joe came back with a flask in one hand and three wine-glasses caught by the stems between the fingers of the other. These he placed on the table with an air of ceremony, and, going behind Nils, held the flask between him and the sun, squinting into it admiringly. "You know dis, Tokai? A great friend of mine, he bring dis to me, a present out of Hongarie. You know how much it cost, dis wine? Chust so much what it weigh in gold. Nobody but de nobles drink him in Bohemie. Many, many years I save him up, dis Tokai." Joe whipped out his official corkscrew and delicately removed the cork. "De old man die what bring him to me, an' dis wine he lay on his belly in my cellar an' sleep. An' now," carefully pouring out the heavy yellow wine, "an' now he wake up; and maybe he wake us up, too!" He carried one of the glasses to his daughter and presented it with great gallantry.

Clara shook her head, but, seeing her father's disappointment, relented. "You taste it first. I don't want so much."

Joe sampled it with a beatific expression, and turned to Nils. "You drink him slow, dis wine. He very soft, but he go down hot. You see!"

After a second glass Nils declared that he couldn't take any more without getting sleepy. "Now get your fiddle, Vavrika," he said as he opened his flute-case.

But Joe settled back in his wooden rocker and wagged his big carpet-slipper. "No-no-no-no-no-no-no! No play fiddle now any more: too much ache in de finger," waving them, "all-a-time rheumatiz. You play de flute, te-tety-te-tety-te. Bohemie songs."

"I've forgotten all the Bohemian songs I used to play with you and Johanna. But here's one that will make Clara pout. You remember how her eyes used to snap when we called her the Bohemian Girl?" Nils lifted his flute and began "When Other Lips and Other Hearts," and Joe hummed the air in a husky baritone, waving his carpet-slipper. "Oh-h-h, das-a fine music," he cried, clapping his hands as Nils finished. "Now 'Marble Halls, Marble Halls'! Clara, you sing him."

Clara smiled and leaned back in her chair, beginning softly:

"I dreamt that I dwelt in ma-a-arble halls,
With vassals and serfs at my knee,"

and Joe hummed like a big bumble-bee.

"There's one more you always played," Clara said quietly; "I remember that best." She locked her hands over her knee and began "The Heart Bowed Down," and sang it through without groping for the words. She was singing with a good deal of warmth when she came to the end of the old song:

"For memory is the only friend
That grief can call its own."

Joe flashed out his red silk handkerchief and blew his nose, shaking his head. "No-no-no-no-no-no-no! Too sad, too sad! I not like-a dat. Play quick somet'ing gay now."

Nils put his lips to the instrument, and Joe lay back in his chair, laughing and singing, "Oh, Evelina, Sweet Evelina!" Clara laughed, too. Long ago, when she and Nils went to high school, the model student of their class was a very homely girl in thick spectacles. Her name was Evelina Oleson; she had a long, swinging walk which somehow suggested the measure of that song, and they used mercilessly to sing it at her.

"Dat ugly Oleson girl, she teach in de school," Joe gasped, "an' she still walk chust like dat, yup-a, yup-a, yup-a, chust like a camel she go! Now, Nils, we have some more li'l drink. Oh, yes-yes-yes-yes-yes-yes-*yes!* Dis time you haf to drink, and Clara she haf to, so she show she not jealous. So, we all drink to your girl. You not tell her name, eh? No-no-no, I no make you tell. She pretty, eh? She make good sweetheart? I bet!" Joe winked and lifted his glass. "How soon you get married?"

Nils screwed up his eyes. "That I don't know. When she says."

Joe threw out his chest. "Das-a way boys talks. No way for mans. Mans say, 'You come to de church, an' get a hurry on you.' Das-a way mans talks."

"Maybe Nils hasn't got enough to keep a wife," put in Clara ironically. "How about that, Nils?" she asked him frankly, as if she wanted to know.

Nils looked at her coolly, raising one eyebrow. "Oh, I can keep her, all right."

"The way she wants to be kept?"

"With my wife, I'll decide that," replied Nils calmly. "I'll give her what's good for her."

Clara made a wry face. "You'll give her the strap, I expect, like old Peter Oleson gave his wife."

"When she needs it," said Nils lazily, locking his hands behind his head and squinting up through the leaves of the cherry tree. "Do you remember the time I squeezed the cherries all over your clean dress, and Aunt Johanna boxed my ears for me? My gracious, weren't you mad! You had both hands full of cherries, and I squeezed 'em and made the juice fly all over you. I liked to have fun with you; you'd get so mad."

"We *did* have fun, didn't we? None of the other kids ever had so much fun. We knew how to play."

Nils dropped his elbows on the table and looked steadily across at her. "I've played with lots of girls since, but I haven't found one who was such good fun."

Clara laughed. The late afternoon sun was shining full in her face, and deep in the back of her eyes there shone something fiery, like the yellow drops of Tokai in the brown glass bottle. "Can you still play, or are you only pretending?"

"I can play better than I used to, and harder."

"Don't you ever work, then?" She had not intended to say it. It slipped out because she was confused enough to say just the wrong thing.

"I work between times." Nils' steady gaze still beat upon her. "Don't you worry about my working, Mrs. Ericson. You're getting like all the rest of them." He reached his brown, warm hand across the table and dropped it on Clara's, which was cold as an icicle. "Last call for play, Mrs. Ericson!" Clara shivered, and suddenly her hands and cheeks grew warm. Her fingers lingered in his a moment, and they looked at each other earnestly. Joe Vavrika had put the mouth of the bottle to his lips and was swallowing the last drops of the Tokai, standing. The sun, just about to sink behind his shop, glistened on the bright glass, on his flushed face and curly yellow hair. "Look," Clara whispered; "that's the way I want to grow old."

VI

On the day of Olaf Ericson's barn-raising, his wife, for once in a way, rose early. Johanna Vavrika had been baking cakes and frying and boiling and spicing meats for a week beforehand, but it was not until the day before the party was to take place that Clara showed any interest in it. Then she was seized with one of her fitful spasms of energy, and took the wagon and little Eric and spent the day on Plum Creek, gathering vines and swamp goldenrod to decorate the barn.

By four o'clock in the afternoon buggies and wagons began to arrive at the big unpainted building in front of Olaf's house. When Nils and his mother came at five, there were more than fifty people in the barn, and a great drove of children. On the ground floor stood six long tables, set with the crockery of seven flourishing Ericson families, lent for the occasion. In the middle of each table was a big yellow pumpkin, hollowed out and filled with woodbine. In one corner of the barn, behind a pile of green-and-white-striped watermelons, was a circle of chairs for the old people; the younger guests sat on bushel measures or barbed-wire spools, and the children tumbled about in the haymow. The box-stalls Clara had converted into booths. The framework was hidden by goldenrod and sheaves of wheat, and the partitions were covered with wild grapevines full of fruit. At one of these Johanna Vavrika watched over her cooked meats, enough to provision an army; and at the next her kitchen girls had ranged the ice-cream freezers, and Clara was already cutting pies and cakes against the hour of serving. At the third stall, little Hilda, in a bright pink lawn dress, dispensed lemonade throughout the afternoon. Olaf, as a public man, had thought it inadvisable to serve beer in his barn; but Joe Vavrika had come over with two demijohns concealed in his buggy, and after his arrival the wagon-shed was much frequented by the men.

"Hasn't Cousin Clara fixed things lovely?" little Hilda whispered, when Nils went up to her stall and asked for lemonade.

Nils leaned against the booth, talking to the excited little girl and watching the people. The barn faced the west, and the sun, pouring in at the big doors, filled the whole interior with a golden light, through which filtered fine particles of dust from the haymow, where the children were romping. There was a great chattering from the stall where Johanna Vavrika exhibited to the admiring women her platters heaped with fried chicken, her roasts of beef, boiled tongues, and baked hams with cloves stuck in the crisp brown fat and garnished with tansy and parsley. The older women, having assured themselves that there were twenty kinds of cake, not counting cookies, and three dozen fat pies, repaired to the corner behind the pile of watermelons, put on their white aprons, and fell to their knitting and fancy-work. They were a fine company of old women, and a Dutch painter would have loved to find them there together, where the sun made bright patches on the floor and sent long, quivering shafts of gold through the dusky shade up among the rafters. There were fat, rosy old women who looked hot in their best black dresses; spare, alert old women with brown, dark-veined hands; and several of almost heroic frame, not less massive than old Mrs. Ericson herself. Few of them wore glasses, and old Mrs. Svendsen, a Danish woman, who was quite bald, wore the only cap among them. Mrs. Oleson, who had twelve big grandchildren, could still show two braids of yellow hair as thick as her own wrists. Among all these grandmothers there were more brown heads than white. They all had a pleased, prosperous air, as if they were more than satisfied with themselves and with life. Nils, leaning against Hilda's lemonade-stand, watched them as they sat chattering in four languages, their fingers never lagging behind their tongues.

"Look at them over there," he whispered, detaining Clara as she passed him. "Aren't they the Old Guard? I've just counted thirty hands. I guess they've wrung many a chicken's neck and warmed many a boy's jacket for him in their time."

In reality he fell into amazement when he thought of the Herculean labors those fifteen pairs of hands had performed: of the cows they had milked, the butter they had made, the gardens they had planted, the children and grandchildren they had tended, the brooms they had worn out, the mountains of food they had cooked. It made him dizzy. Clara Vavrika smiled a hard, enigmatical smile at him and walked rapidly away. Nils' eyes followed her white figure as she went toward the house. He watched her walking alone in the sunlight, looked at her slender, defiant shoulders and her little hard-set head with its coils of blue-black hair. "No," he reflected; "she'd never be like them, not if she lived here a hundred years. She'd only grow more bitter. You can't tame a wild thing; you can only chain it. People aren't all alike. I mustn't lose my nerve." He gave Hilda's pigtail a parting tweak and set out after Clara. "Where to?" he asked, as he came upon her in the kitchen.

"I'm going to the cellar for preserves."

"Let me go with you. I never get a moment alone with you. Why do you keep out of my way?"

Clara laughed. "I don't usually get in anybody's way."

Nils followed her down the stairs and to the far corner of the cellar, where a basement window let in a stream of light. From a swinging shelf Clara selected several glass jars, each labeled in Johanna's careful hand. Nils took up a brown flask. "What's this? It looks good."

"It is. It's some French brandy father gave me when I was married. Would you like some? Have you a corkscrew? I'll get glasses."

When she brought them, Nils took them from her and put them down on the window-sill. "Clara Vavrika, do you remember how crazy I used to be about you?"

Clara shrugged her shoulders. "Boys are always crazy about somebody or other. I dare say some silly has been crazy about Evelina Oleson. You got over it in a hurry."

"Because I didn't come back, you mean? I had to get on, you know, and it was hard sledding at first. Then I heard you'd married Olaf."

"And then you stayed away from a broken heart," Clara laughed.

"And then I began to think about you more than I had since I first went away. I began to wonder if you were really as you had seemed to me when I was a boy. I thought I'd like to see. I've had lots of girls, but no one ever pulled me the same way. The more I thought about you, the more I remembered how it used to be — like hearing a wild tune you can't resist, calling you out at night. It had been a long while since anything had pulled me out of my boots, and I wondered whether anything ever could again." Nils thrust his hands into his coat pockets and squared his shoulders, as his mother sometimes squared hers, as Olaf, in a clumsier manner, squared his. "So I thought I'd come back and see. Of course the family have tried to do me, and I rather thought I'd bring out father's will and make a fuss. But they can have their old land; they've put enough sweat into it." He took the flask and filled the two glasses carefully to the brim. "I've found out what I want from the Ericsons. Drink *skoal*, Clara." He lifted his glass, and Clara took hers with downcast eyes. "Look at me, Clara Vavrika. *Skoal!*"

She raised her burning eyes and answered fiercely: "*Skoal!*"

The barn supper began at six o'clock and lasted for two hilarious hours. Yense Nelson had made a wager that he could eat two whole fried chickens, and he did. Eli Swanson stowed away two whole custard pies, and Nick Hermanson ate a chocolate layer cake to the last crumb. There was even a cooky contest among the children, and one thin, slablike Bohemian boy consumed sixteen and won the prize, a gingerbread pig which Johanna Vavrika had carefully decorated with red candies and burnt sugar. Fritz Sweiheart, the German carpenter, won in the pickle contest, but he disappeared soon after supper and was not seen for the rest of the evening. Joe Vavrika said that Fritz could have managed the pickles all right, but he had sampled the demijohn in his buggy too often before sitting down to the table.

While the supper was being cleared away the two fiddlers began to tune up for the dance. Clara was to accompany them on her old upright piano, which had been brought down from her father's. By this time Nils had renewed old acquaintances. Since his interview with Clara in the cellar, he had been busy telling all the old women how young they looked, and all the young ones how pretty they were, and assuring the men that they had here the best farm-land in the world. He had made himself so agreeable that old Mrs. Ericson's friends began to come up to her and tell how lucky she was to get her smart son back again, and please to get him to play his flute. Joe Vavrika, who could still play very well when he forgot that he had rheumatism, caught up a fiddle from Johnny Oleson and played a crazy Bohemian dance tune that set the wheels going. When he dropped the bow every one was ready to dance.

Olaf, in a frock-coat and a solemn made-up necktie, led the grand march with his mother. Clara had kept well out of *that* by sticking to the piano. She played the march with a pompous solemnity which greatly amused the prodigal son, who went over and stood behind her.

"Oh, aren't you rubbing it into them, Clara Vavrika? And aren't you lucky to have me here, or all your wit would be thrown away."

"I'm used to being witty for myself. It saves my life."

The fiddles struck up a polka, and Nils convulsed Joe Vavrika by leading out Evelina Oleson, the homely school-teacher. His next partner was a very fat Swedish girl, who, although she was an heiress, had not been asked for the first dance, but had stood against the wall in her tight, high-heeled shoes, nervously fingering a lace handkerchief. She was soon out of breath, so Nils led her, pleased and panting, to her seat, and went over to the piano, from which Clara had been watching his gallantry. "Ask Olena Yenson," she whispered. "She waltzes beautifully."

Olena, too, was rather inconveniently plump, handsome in a smooth, heavy way, with a fine color and good-natured, sleepy eyes. She was redolent of violet sachet powder, and had warm, soft, white hands, but she danced divinely, moving as smoothly as the tide coming in. "There, that's something like," Nils said as he released her. "You'll give me the next waltz, won't you? Now I must go and dance with my little cousin."

Hilda was greatly excited when Nils went up to her stall and held out his arm. Her little eyes sparkled, but she declared that she could not leave her lemonade. Old Mrs. Ericson, who happened along at this moment, said she would attend to that, and Hilda came out, as pink as her pink dress. The dance was a schottische, and in a moment her yellow braids were fairly standing on end. "Bravo!" Nils cried encouragingly. "Where did you learn to dance so nicely?"

"My Cousin Clara taught me," the little girl panted.

Nils found Eric sitting with a group of boys who were too awkward or too shy to dance, and told him that he must dance the next waltz with Hilda.

The boy screwed up his shoulders. "Aw, Nils, I can't dance. My feet are too big; I look silly."

"Don't be thinking about yourself. It doesn't matter how boys look."

Nils had never spoken to him so sharply before, and Eric made haste to scramble out of his corner and brush the straw from his coat.

Clara nodded approvingly. "Good for you, Nils. I've been trying to get hold of him. They dance very nicely together; I sometimes play for them."

"I'm obliged to you for teaching him. There's no reason why he should grow up to be a lout."

"He'll never be that. He's more like you than any of them. Only he hasn't your courage." From her slanting eyes Clara shot forth one of those keen glances, admiring and at the same time challenging, which she seldom bestowed on any one, and which seemed to say, "Yes, I admire you, but I am your equal."

Clara was proving a much better host than Olaf, who, once the supper was over, seemed to feel no interest in anything but the lanterns. He had brought a locomotive headlight from town to light the revels, and he kept skulking about it as if he feared the mere light from it might set his new barn on fire. His wife, on the contrary, was cordial to every one, was animated and even gay. The deep salmon color in her cheeks burned vividly, and her eyes were full of life. She gave the piano over to the fat Swedish heiress, pulled her father away from the corner where he sat gossiping with his cronies, and made him dance a Bohemian dance with her. In his youth Joe had been a famous dancer, and his daughter got him so limbered up that every one sat round and applauded them. The old ladies were particularly delighted, and made them go through the dance again. From their corner where they watched and commented, the old women kept time with their feet and hands, and whenever the fiddles struck up a new air old Mrs. Svendsen's white cap would begin to bob.

Clara was waltzing with little Eric when Nils came up to them, brushed his brother aside, and swung her out among the dancers. "Remember how we used to waltz on rollers at the old skating-rink in town? I suppose people don't do that any more. We used to keep it up for hours. You know, we never did moon around as other boys and girls did. It was dead serious with us from the beginning. When we were most in love with each other, we used to fight. You were always pinching people; your fingers were like little nippers. A regular snapping-turtle, you were. Lord, how you'd like

Stockholm! Sit out in the streets in front of cafés and talk all night in summer. Just like a reception — officers and ladies and funny English people. Jolliest people in the world, the Swedes, once you get them going. Always drinking things — champagne and stout mixed, half-and-half; serve it out of big pitchers, and serve plenty. Slow pulse, you know; they can stand a lot. Once they light up, they're glow-worms, I can tell you."

"All the same, you don't really like gay people."

"*I* don't?"

"No; I could see that when you were looking at the old women there this afternoon. They're the kind you really admire, after all; women like your mother. And that's the kind you'll marry."

"Is it, Miss Wisdom? You'll see who I'll marry, and she won't have a domestic virtue to bless herself with. She'll be a snapping-turtle, and she'll be a match for me. All the same, they're a fine bunch of old dames over there. You admire them yourself."

"No, I don't; I detest them."

"You won't, when you look back on them from Stockholm or Budapesth. Freedom settles all that. Oh, but you're the real Bohemian Girl, Clara Vavrika!" Nils laughed down at her sullen frown and began mockingly to sing:

"Oh, how could a poor gypsy maiden like me
Expect the proud bride of a baron to be?"

Clara clutched his shoulder. "Hush, Nils; every one is looking at you."

"I don't care. They can't gossip. It's all in the family, as the Ericsons say when they divide up little Hilda's patrimony amongst them. Besides, we'll give them something to talk about when we hit the trail. Lord, it will be a godsend to them! They haven't had anything so interesting to chatter about since the grasshopper year. It'll give them a new lease of life. And Olaf won't lose the Bohemian vote, either. They'll have the laugh on him so that they'll vote two apiece. They'll send him to Congress. They'll never forget his barn party, or us. They'll always remember us as we're dancing together now. We're making a legend. Where's my waltz, boys?" he called as they whirled past the fiddlers.

The musicians grinned, looked at each other, hesitated, and began a new air; and Nils sang with them, as the couples fell from a quick waltz to a long, slow glide:

"When other lips and other hearts
Their tale of love shall tell,
In language whose excess imparts
The power they feel so well,"

The old women applauded vigorously. "What a gay one he is, that Nils!" And old Mrs. Svendsen's cap lurched dreamily from side to side to the flowing measure of the dance.

"Of days that have as ha-a-p-py been,
And you'll remember me."

VII

The moonlight flooded that great, silent land. The reaped fields lay yellow in it. The straw stacks and poplar windbreaks threw sharp black shadows. The roads were white rivers of dust. The sky was a deep, crystalline blue, and the stars were few and faint. Everything seemed to have succumbed, to have sunk to sleep, under the great, golden, tender, midsummer moon. The splendor of it seemed to transcend human life and human fate. The senses were too feeble to take it in, and every time one looked up at the sky one felt unequal to it, as if one were sitting deaf under the waves of a great river of melody. Near the road, Nils Ericson was lying against a straw stack in Olaf's wheat-field. His own life seemed strange and unfamiliar to him, as if it were something he had read about, or dreamed, and forgotten. He lay very still, watching the white road that ran in front of him, lost itself among the fields, and then, at a distance, reappeared over a little hill. At last, against this white band he saw something moving rapidly, and he got up and walked to the edge of the field. "She is passing the row of poplars now," he thought. He heard the padded beat of hoofs along the dusty road, and as she came into sight he stepped out and waved his arms. Then, for fear of frightening the horse, he drew back and waited. Clara had seen him, and she came up at a walk. Nils took the horse by the bit and stroked his neck.

"What are you doing out so late, Clara Vavrika? I went to the house, but Johanna told me you had gone to your father's."

"Who can stay in the house on a night like this? Aren't you out yourself?"

"Ah, but that's another matter."

Nils turned the horse into the field.

"What are you doing? Where are you taking Norman?"

"Not far, but I want to talk to you to-night; I have something to say to you. I can't talk to you at the house, with Olaf sitting there on the porch, weighing a thousand tons."

Clara laughed. "He won't be sitting there now. He's in bed by this time, and asleep — weighing a thousand tons."

Nils plodded on across the stubble. "Are you really going to spend the rest of your life like this, night after night, summer after summer? Haven't you anything better to do on a night like this than to wear yourself and Norman out tearing across the country to your father's and back? Besides, your father won't live forever, you know. His little place will be shut up or sold, and then you'll have nobody but the Ericsons. You'll have to fasten down the hatches for the winter then."

Clara moved her head restlessly. "Don't talk about that. I try never to think of it. If I lost father I'd lose everything, even my hold over the Ericsons."

"Bah! You'd lose a good deal more than that. You'd lose your race, everything that makes you yourself. You've lost a good deal of it now."

"Of what?"

"Of your love of life, your capacity for delight."

Clara put her hands up to her face. "I haven't, Nils Ericson, I haven't! Say anything to me but that. I won't have it!" she declared vehemently.

Nils led the horse up to a straw stack, and turned to Clara, looking at her intently, as he had looked at her that Sunday afternoon at Vavrika's. "But why do you fight for that so? What good is the power to enjoy, if you never enjoy? Your hands are cold again; what are you afraid of all the time? Ah, you're afraid of losing it; that's what's the matter with you! And you will, Clara Vavrika, you will! When I used to know you—listen; you've caught a wild bird in your hand, haven't you, and felt its heart beat so hard that you were afraid it would shatter its little body to pieces? Well, you used to be just like that, a slender, eager thing with a wild delight inside you. That is how I remembered you. And I come back and find you—a bitter woman. This is a perfect ferret fight here; you live by biting and being bitten. Can't you remember what life used to be? Can't you remember that old delight? I've never forgotten it, or known its like, on land or sea."

He drew the horse under the shadow of the straw stack. Clara felt him take her foot out of the stirrup, and she slid softly down into his arms. He kissed her slowly. He was a deliberate man, but his nerves were steel when he wanted anything. Something flashed out from him like a knife out of a sheath. Clara felt everything slipping away from her; she was flooded by the summer night. He thrust his hand into his pocket, and then held it out at arm's length. "Look," he said. The shadow of the straw stack fell sharp across his wrist, and in the palm of his hand she saw a silver dollar shining. "That's my pile," he muttered; "will you go with me?"

Clara nodded, and dropped her forehead on his shoulder.

Nils took a deep breath. "Will you go with me to-night?"

"Where?" she whispered softly.

"To town, to catch the midnight flyer."

Clara lifted her head and pulled herself together. "Are you crazy, Nils? We couldn't go away like that."

"That's the only way we ever will go. You can't sit on the bank and think about it. You have to plunge. That's the way I've always done, and it's the right way for people like you and me. There's nothing so dangerous as sitting still. You've only got one life, one youth, and you can let it slip through your fingers if you want to; nothing easier. Most people do that. You'd be better off tramping the roads with me than you are here." Nils held back her head and looked into her eyes. "But I'm not that kind of a tramp, Clara. You won't have to take in sewing. I'm with a Norwegian shipping line; came over on business with the New York offices, but now I'm going straight back to Bergen. I expect I've got as much money as the Ericsons. Father sent me a little to get started. They never knew about that. There, I hadn't meant to tell you; I wanted you to come on your own nerve."

Clara looked off across the fields. "It isn't that, Nils, but something seems to hold me. I'm afraid to pull against it. It comes out of the ground, I think."

"I know all about that. One has to tear loose. You're not needed here. Your father will understand; he's made like us. As for Olaf, Johanna will take better care of him than ever you could. It's now or never, Clara Vavrika. My bag's at the station; I smuggled it there yesterday."

Clara clung to him and hid her face against his shoulder. "Not to-night," she whispered. "Sit here and talk to me to-night. I don't want to go anywhere to-night. I may never love you like this again."

Nils laughed through his teeth. "You can't come that on me. That's not my way, Clara Vavrika. Eric's mare is over there behind the stacks, and I'm off on the midnight. It's good-by, or off across the world with me. My carriage won't wait. I've written a letter to Olaf; I'll mail it in town. When he reads it he won't bother us—not if I know him. He'd rather have the land. Besides, I could demand an investigation of his administration of Cousin Henrik's estate, and that would be bad for a public man. You've no clothes, I know; but you can sit up to-night, and we can get everything on the way. Where's your old dash, Clara Vavrika? What's become of your Bohemian blood? I used to think you had courage enough for anything. Where's your nerve — what are you waiting for?"

Clara drew back her head, and he saw the slumberous fire in her eyes. "For you to say one thing, Nils Ericson."

"I never say that thing to any woman, Clara Vavrika." He leaned back, lifted her gently from the ground, and whispered through his teeth: "But I'll never, never let you go, not to any man on earth but me! Do you understand me? Now, wait here."

Clara sank down on a sheaf of wheat and covered her face with her hands. She did not know what she was going to do — whether she would go or stay. The great, silent country seemed to lay a spell upon her. The ground seemed to hold her as if by roots. Her knees were soft under her. She felt as if she could not bear separation from her old sorrows, from her old discontent. They were dear to her, they had kept her alive, they were a part of her. There would be nothing left of her if she were wrenched away from them. Never could she pass beyond that sky-line against which her restlessness had beat so many times. She felt as if her soul had built itself a nest there on that horizon at which she looked every morning and every evening, and it was dear to her, inexpressibly dear. She pressed her fingers against her eyeballs to shut it out. Beside her she heard the tramping of horses in the soft earth. Nils said nothing to her. He put his hands under her arms and lifted her lightly to her saddle. Then he swung himself into his own.

"We shall have to ride fast to catch the midnight train. A last gallop, Clara Vavrika. Forward!"

There was a start, a thud of hoofs along the moonlit road, two dark shadows going over the hill; and then the great, still land stretched untroubled under the azure night. Two shadows had passed.

VIII

A year after the flight of Olaf Ericson's wife, the night train was steaming across the plains of Iowa. The conductor was hurrying through one of the day-coaches, his lantern on his arm, when a lank, fair-haired boy sat up in one of the plush seats and tweaked him by the coat.

"What is the next stop, please, sir?"

"Red Oak, Iowa. But you go through to Chicago, don't you?" He looked down, and noticed that the boy's eyes were red and his face was drawn, as if he were in trouble.

"Yes. But I was wondering whether I could get off at the next place and get a train back to Omaha."

"Well, I suppose you could. Live in Omaha?"

"No. In the western part of the State. How soon do we get to Red Oak?"

"Forty minutes. You'd better make up your mind, so I can tell the baggageman to put your trunk off."

"Oh, never mind about that! I mean, I haven't got any," the boy added, blushing.

"Run away," the conductor thought, as he slammed the coach door behind him.

Eric Ericson crumpled down in his seat and put his brown hand to his forehead. He had been crying, and he had had no supper, and his head was aching violently. "Oh, what shall I do?" he thought, as he looked dully down at his big shoes. "Nils will be ashamed of me; I haven't got any spunk."

Ever since Nils had run away with his brother's wife, life at home had been hard for little Eric. His mother and Olaf both suspected him of complicity. Mrs. Ericson was harsh and fault-finding, constantly wounding the boy's pride; and Olaf was always setting her against him.

Joe Vavrika heard often from his daughter. Clara had always been fond of her father, and happiness made her kinder. She wrote him long accounts of the voyage to Bergen, and of the trip she and Nils took through Bohemia to the little town where her father had grown up and where she herself was born. She visited all her kinsmen there, and sent her father news of his brother, who was a priest; of his sister, who had married a horse-breeder — of their big farm and their many children. These letters Joe always managed to read to little Eric. They contained messages for Eric and Hilda. Clara sent presents, too, which Eric never dared to take home and which poor little Hilda never even saw, though she loved to hear Eric tell about them when they were out getting the eggs together. But Olaf once saw Eric coming out of Vavrika's house,— the old man had never asked the boy to come into his saloon,— and Olaf went straight to his mother and told her. That night Mrs. Ericson came to Eric's room after he was in bed and made a terrible scene. She could be very terrifying when she was really angry. She forbade him ever to speak to Vavrika again, and after that night she would not allow him to go to town alone. So it was a long while before Eric got any more news of his brother. But old Joe suspected what was going on, and he carried Clara's letters about in his pocket. One Sunday he drove out to see a German friend of his, and chanced to catch sight of Eric, sitting by the cattle-pond in the big pasture. They went together into Fritz Oberlies' barn, and read the letters and talked things over. Eric admitted that things were getting hard for him at home. That very night old Joe sat down and laboriously penned a statement of the case to his daughter.

Things got no better for Eric. His mother and Olaf felt that, however closely he was watched, he still, as they said, "heard." Mrs. Ericson could not admit neutrality. She had sent Johanna Vavrika packing back to her brother's, though Olaf would much rather have kept her than Anders' eldest daughter, whom Mrs. Ericson installed in her place. He was not so high-handed as his mother, and he once sulkily told her that she might better have taught her granddaughter to cook before she sent Johanna away. Olaf could have borne a good deal for the sake of prunes spiced in honey, the secret of which Johanna had taken away with her.

At last two letters came to Joe Vavrika: one from Nils, inclosing a postal order for money to pay Eric's passage to Bergen, and one from Clara, saying that Nils had a place for Eric in the offices of his company, that he was to live with them, and that they were only waiting for him to come. He was to leave New York on one of the boats of Nils' own line; the captain was one of their friends, and Eric was to make himself known at once.

Nils' directions were so explicit that a baby could have followed them, Eric felt. And here he was, nearing Red Oak, Iowa, and rocking backward and forward in despair. Never had he loved his brother so much, and never had the big world called to him so hard. But there was a lump in his throat which would not go down. Ever since nightfall he had been tormented by the thought of his mother, alone in that big house that had sent forth so many men. Her unkindness now seemed so little, and her loneliness so great. He remembered everything she had ever done for him: how frightened she had been when he tore his hand in the corn-sheller, and how she wouldn't let Olaf scold him. When Nils went away he didn't leave his mother all alone, or he would never have gone. Eric felt sure of that.

The train whistled. The conductor came in, smiling not unkindly. "Well, young man, what are you going to do? We stop at Red Oak in three minutes."

"Yes, thank you. I'll let you know." The conductor went out, and the boy doubled up with misery. He couldn't let his one chance go like this. He felt for his breast pocket and crackled Nils' kind letter to give him courage. He didn't want Nils to be ashamed of him. The train stopped. Suddenly he remembered his brother's kind, twinkling eyes, that always looked at you as if from far away. The lump in his throat softened. "Ah, but Nils, Nils would *understand!*" he thought. "That's just it about Nils; he always understands."

A lank, pale boy with a canvas telescope stumbled off the train to the Red Oak siding, just as the conductor called, "All aboard!"

The next night Mrs. Ericson was sitting alone in her wooden rocking-chair on the front porch. Little Hilda had been sent to bed and had cried herself to sleep. The old woman's knitting was in her lap, but her hands lay motionless on top of it. For more than an hour she had not moved a muscle. She simply sat, as only the Ericsons and the mountains can sit. The house was dark, and there was no sound but the croaking of the frogs down in the pond of the little pasture.

Eric did not come home by the road, but across the fields, where no one could see him. He set his telescope down softly in the kitchen shed, and slipped noiselessly along the path to the front porch. He sat down on the step without saying anything. Mrs. Ericson made no sign, and the frogs croaked on. At last the boy spoke timidly.

"I've come back, Mother."

"Very well," said Mrs. Ericson.

Eric leaned over and picked up a little stick out of the grass.

"How about the milking?" he faltered.

"That's been done, hours ago."

"Who did you get?"

"Get? I did it myself. I can milk as good as any of you."

Eric slid along the step nearer to her. "Oh, Mother, why did you?" he asked sorrowfully. "Why didn't you get one of Otto's boys?"

"I didn't want anybody to know I was in need of a boy," said Mrs. Ericson bitterly. She looked straight in front of her and her mouth tightened. "I always meant to give you the home farm," she added.

The boy started and slid closer. "Oh, Mother," he faltered, "I don't care about the farm. I came back because I thought you might be needing me, maybe." He hung his head and got no further.

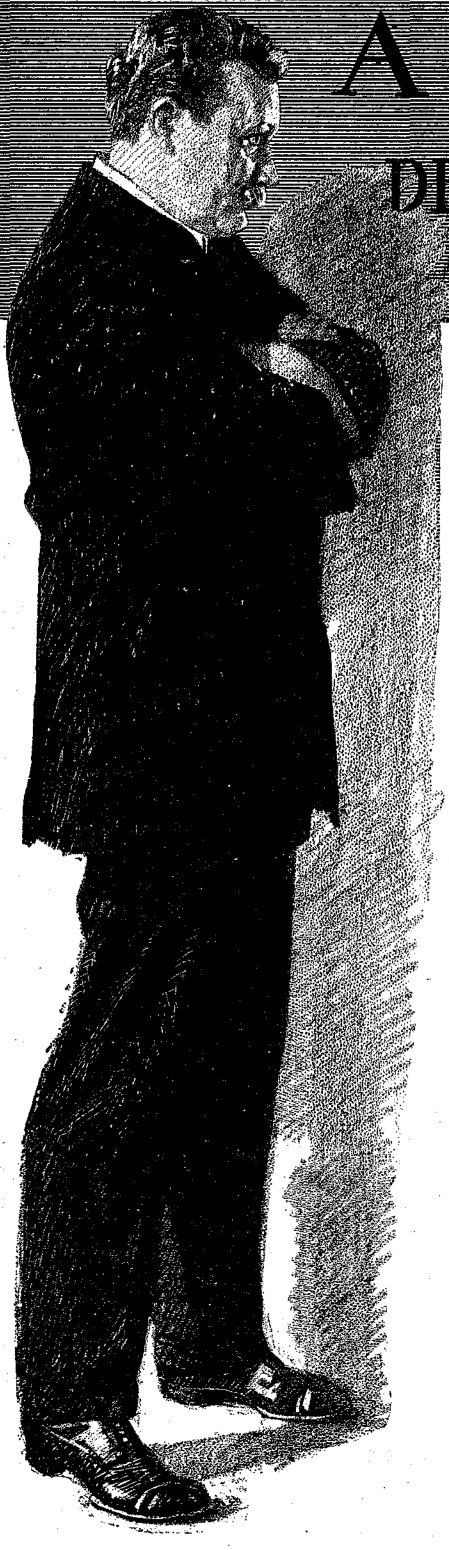
"Very well," said Mrs. Ericson. Her hand went out from her suddenly and rested on his head. Her fingers twined themselves in his soft, pale hair. His tears splashed down on the boards; happiness filled his heart.

A CASE OF DETECTIVE BURNS'

BY

HARVEY J. O'HIGGINS

One of the modern uses of an expert detective like
in State and city. Mr. Burns has already performed
two years ago he was called by a Citizens' Associa-
modus operandi of the political gangsters in that
reformers with information that a political upheaval
tained and the Chief of Police has been sentenced to
use of the dictagraph in Columbus, Ohio, that a cor-
rout and several members actually sent to jail. Mr.
Atlantic City. If Governor Wilson succeeds in his
ipal rottenness, it will be largely through the work of
accurate data. The following article shows that Mr.
manies of most of our good-sized cities and that
duces tangible results.



THE DETECTIVE

THIS affair took place, not long ago, in one of "these United States," as the campaign orators say; and, to save a violation of confidence, suppose we locate it in the State of Columbia.

William J. Burns had arrived in the capital of Columbia on matters connected with the business of his detective agency. He had registered at the New Jefferson under an assumed name, and set about directing his local manager and his operatives on the cases that they had in hand. On the street, he happened to meet an old friend who was a leader of the Progressive Republicans in Columbia; and they ate dinner together in the evening, at the hotel, and discussed the political situation, among other things. And the political situation was something like this:

A Ring-Ridden Democracy

Columbia was nominally a self-governing American democracy whose rulers were elected

NOTE: For obvious reasons, proper names have
acter and incident have been disguised in this

CORRUPTION
GREAT CASES

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

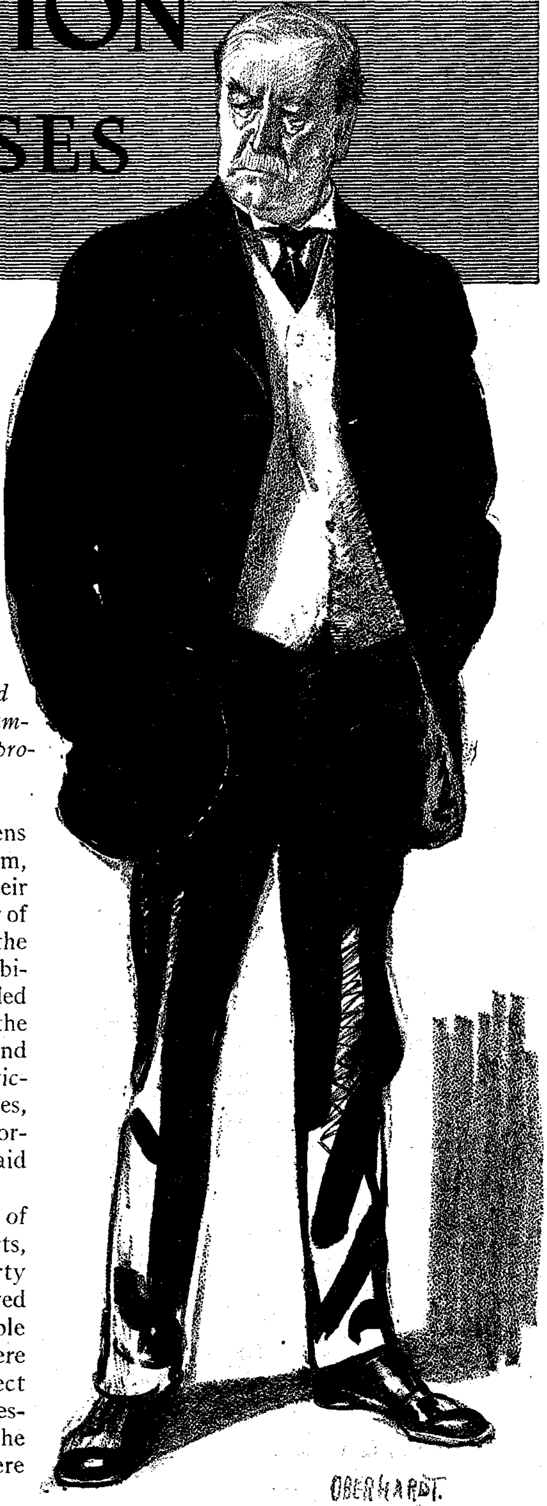
WILLIAM OBERHARDT

Mr. Burns is uncovering political corruption
several interesting feats of this sort. About
tion to Seattle to find out just what was the
town. He was so successful in supplying the
took place. Several indictments have been ob-
prison. A little while ago he made such clever
rupt legislative crowd was completely put to
Burns' latest work of this kind has been in
attempts to clean up this headquarters of munic-
Mr. Burns in supplying him with complete and
Burns' name is already well known to the Tam-
the mere suspicion of his presence in town pro-

by the ballots of sovereign American citizens exercising their inalienable rights of freedom, under the palladium of their liberties, their Constitution; but really, as a political matter of fact, the government and administration of the State of Columbia were in the hands of a bipartizan gang of public corruptionists, presided over by a political Boss who represented the wealthy corporations of the State in general and the controlling railroad of the district in particular. And the people, who paid all the taxes, had practically no representation; and the corporations, who had all the representatives, paid practically no taxes.

It followed that the rulers of the State of Columbia — their governor, legislators, courts, administrative officers, politicians, and party newspapers — were stand-patters who believed in letting "well enough alone." And the people of the State had become progressives who were ungratefully dissatisfied with the most perfect form of government ever devised for the preservation of the rights of property and the expression of the popular will. They were

been changed and recognizable details of char-
narrative beyond any possibility of identification.



THE BOSS

demanding direct primaries, the initiative, the referendum, the recall, a railroad commission, and a wholesale reformation of things political. Led by a lot of agitators and demagogues,—not to say "anarchists and enemies of prosperity,"—they had organized a Progressive party, nominated a candidate for the governorship on a reform ticket, and stampeded upon a campaign of unrest that was "viewed with alarm" by every true friend of their constitutional guaranties, to the latter end of all eloquence.

Burns had worked in Columbia as a Secret Service operative pursuing counterfeiters, then as a special agent detailed to investigate a Federal department, and finally as the head and front of his national detective agency. He knew the political conditions of the State—cellar, parlor, and attic. And he knew that if the election was to be close, the odds would favor the corruption funds of the corporationists. His friend, the Progressive, agreed with him.

They parted when Burns went out to do a night's work personally on a case that was ready for his final touches. He did not get to bed till four in the morning. He was in his bath again at seven, freshening up for a new day, like a fire chief who has had a night alarm; and at seven-thirty he was in his bedroom, dressing and dictating telegrams and letters to a man from his local office, while he was still drying his head in a bath towel. A telephone call from the hotel desk interrupted him long enough for him to say: "Ask them to come up." "And, Jim," he directed the stenographer, "get these letters together and I'll finish them at breakfast."

He received his visitors in his shirt-sleeves, knotting his neck-tie. They were his friend the Progressive and a stranger — who proved to be the chairman and campaign manager of the Progressive party.

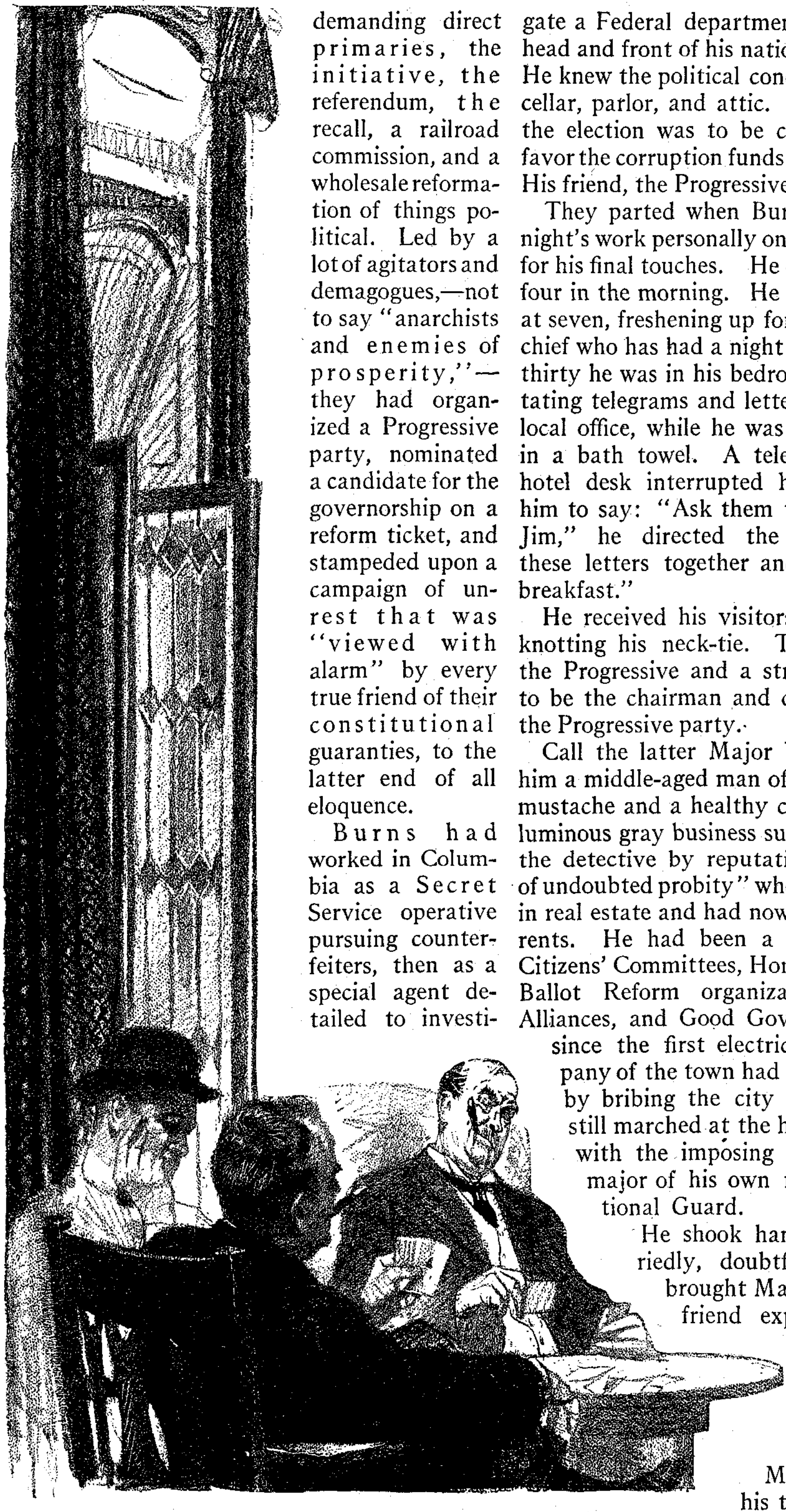
Call the latter Major Walker, and imagine him a middle-aged man of weight, with a white mustache and a healthy color, dressed in a voluminous gray business suit. He was known to the detective by reputation only, as a "man of undoubted probity" who had made his money in real estate and had now retired to live on his rents. He had been a chronic chairman of Citizens' Committees, Honest Election Leagues, Ballot Reform organizations, Independence Alliances, and Good Government Clubs, ever since the first electric street-railway company of the town had obtained its franchise by bribing the city government; and he still marched at the head of popular revolt with the imposing dignity of the drum major of his own regiment of the National Guard.

He shook hands with Burns worriedly, doubtfully, in silence. "I brought Major Walker here," his friend explained, "because I think you can help him in a confidential matter."

"Go ahead," Burns said cheerfully.

Major Walker cleared his throat as if for a long exposition. "It concerns our political situation."

"Can you talk it over



"HE KNEW MORSE WELL BY REPUTATION. AN OLD BACHELOR WHO LIVED AT THE COLUMBIA CLUB IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF POLITICS, SCOTCH WHISKY, AND DRAW POKER, HE WAS NOTORIOUS FOR HIS ABILITY TO BE SILENT IN ALL THREE" with me while I'm having breakfast?" Burns proposed.

"We'd better not be seen together. Some reporter ——"

"Wait for me in the dining-room," he directed the stenographer, "with those letters. . . . Yes?"

And when the stenographer had closed the door behind him softly, Burns went on with his dressing, and the men unfolded their case.

Burns is Asked to Come into the Game

They had learned that the forces opposed to political reform had been making a canvass of the State, and this canvass had shown that the Progressives were likely to carry the election unless an extraordinary effort was made to defeat them. The corrupt Boss had called a council of his henchmen, and together they had gone over the doubtful districts and figured in dollars and cents the cost of "getting out the votes" necessary to keep the machine in power. The Boss had boasted the largest "dough-bag" in the history of the State. The glad tidings had been carried to the district leaders, ward captains, heelers, and political stalwarts of both party machines; and their rejoicing had been almost public. "There's no doubt of it," Major Walker said. "They're going to defeat us by the grossest forms of bribery and corruption. They have millions. They've exhausted every other form of influence and coercion. Now they're going to buy the State."

Burns asked: "What do you propose to do?"

His friend the Progressive replied: "Well, we'd like you to make an investigation, so as to be sure that what we've heard is true. And, if it *is* true, we want you to get the evidence of it, on election day, for the purpose of unseating their Governor."

"When are the elections?"

"Ten days from to-day."

A Rush Order in Detective Work

In the ordinary course of detective methods, it would be impossible to make such an investigation in ten days. The operatives would have to have time to work through a careful "approach" from a distance, slowly, without any appearance of "shoving in." And ordinarily they move in a sort of circular progress that narrows to its center, with every step protected by credentials obtained by ruse and manipulation.

Burns asked: "You'll have to try these people before their own judges, practically. Won't you?"

Major Walker inclined his head. "But, even if we fail to unseat them, an exposure will arouse the public."

Burns stood a moment looking out of the window. "Is old Nat Morse still in the game, the way he used to be?"

"Yes," his friend said. "He's still the main gazebo for the railroad company."

"And attorney for the brewers?"

"Yes, and 'the liberal element' generally."

"I see," Burns concluded thoughtfully. "All right. I'll look the situation over. I'll let you know how I get along. Communicate with me through our local office. And don't recognize me if you meet me anywhere."

Major Walker asked: "Can you give me any idea how much the work will cost? Our treasury ——"

"Well," Burns said, "I think I can handle it in a way that will cost you very little. I'll let you know about that in a day or two. I'll have to look over the ground first."

Burns as a Representative of the Liquor Interests

As a matter of fact, he knew the ground blindfold, in the dark. But he had to find a short cut that should carry him, in ten days, over difficulties that ought to have had weeks of skilful manoeuvering allowed for them.

He began by telephoning to his office to have one of his men obtain for him a number of calling cards in the name of "Mr. William H. Hicks," representing the "National Liberal League," with headquarters in New York. (The League, of course, was an invention.) Then he finished his correspondence and his breakfast together, and went out to his other cases.

Next morning, in the person of William H. Hicks, he presented his card to one of the officials of a corporation that was active in the politics of the State.

"I've come," he explained, "on an unusual mission to you. Confidentially. I'm the representative of the National Liberal League, and we understand that you had some very bad prohibition laws introduced at the last session of your legislature. We are consequently very much interested in the approaching election, and I have come on to do what I can to protect our interests. I understand, of course, that the election is important to a great many other interests,— of which yours is one,— and I hoped that you could help me by referring me to some one who could . . . accept my assistance."

The official, whose name (let us say) was Nelson, had been turning over Hicks' card in his fingers, without a word. He handed it back to

Burns. He said: "You had better see Mr. Morse — Nathaniel Z. Morse — in the Caledonia Building."

"You think he is the best man?"

"Yes; he can advise you."

"Thank you," Burns said briefly. "Good morning." And he went out to find the office of Nathaniel Z. Morse — old "Birdlegs" Morse, corporation lawyer, jury-fixer, political manipulator, and general agent in Columbia for captains of industry who wished to obtain privileges and immunities that they should not have and could only get in ways of which they wished to remain guiltily ignorant.

The Detective and the Boss

He knew Morse well by reputation. An old bachelor, who lived at the Columbia Club in an atmosphere of politics, Scotch whisky, and draw poker, he was notorious for his ability to be silent in all three. He had begun his career as an expert in corporation law; but he had ceased to argue cases since he had learned that the way to win in court was to elect the judge who decided the debate. He made no public appearances, now, either in law or in politics; but every Monday night he sat conspicuous in a stage-box at the Star Burlesque Theater, of which he was a part-owner. He was one of the "characters" of the town. It was on record that no comedian had ever made him smile — though there was a tradition that he had once been seen to look down, with some faint amusement, at a woman in an orchestra chair who had gone into hysterics with laughter. His morals were, broadly speaking, those of the Star Theater's "shows." And Burns approached him in a manner calculated to "rope" a gentleman of his character and way of life.

He was sitting in his prosperous-looking law office, among shelves of books which he no longer needed to consult, at a desk covered with papers which his assistants had prepared for him, reading a telegram with his hat on. He looked at Burns over the top of the yellow sheet, his eyes dull in a setting of flattened pouches that were like the facial eye-disks of an owl. Burns drew up a chair. Morse put down his telegram. They observed each other. "I suppose you recognize me," Burns said.

Morse shook his head.

"I've Got $300,000 to Go Where It'll Do the Most Good"

Burns studied him for a moment. "Well," he said, "my name is Hicks." He presented his card. "You know the people I represent?"

Morse read the card and shook his head again.

"We're interested in seeing that the State doesn't elect members of the legislature who will pass any of these prohibition laws."

Morse closed his eyes and opened them again.

Burns continued: "We're not interested in the governorship so much. We want to help members of the legislature — in doubtful districts. We want to help men who will not be opposed to our interests."

Morse asked throatily: "Who sent you to *me?*"

Burns considered that question. He replied: "A friend of yours. Let me explain the situation to you. I've got three hundred thousand dollars to handle. It doesn't matter where it comes from; the question is, where to put it. We want it to go where it'll do the most good." He added: "Didn't any one tell you I'd be in?"

Morse said: "No."

"Are you sure? Hasn't any brewer spoken to you?"

Morse turned aside in his swivel chair. He looked at his feet. He stretched out his long, thin legs — the legs of a sandpiper on a bloated body. He settled down comfortably on his shoulder-blades and folded his hands over his abdomen. Then he looked up, sidelong, at Burns, under the brim of his hat.

Burns said grudgingly: "If there's any question in your mind, you might call up Mr. Nelson of the ——— Company."

Morse nodded. "Go ahead."

"Well," Burns replied, "there's nothing more to say. I was given to understand that you could refer me to the proper men — in the doubtful districts — who could use this money to advantage."

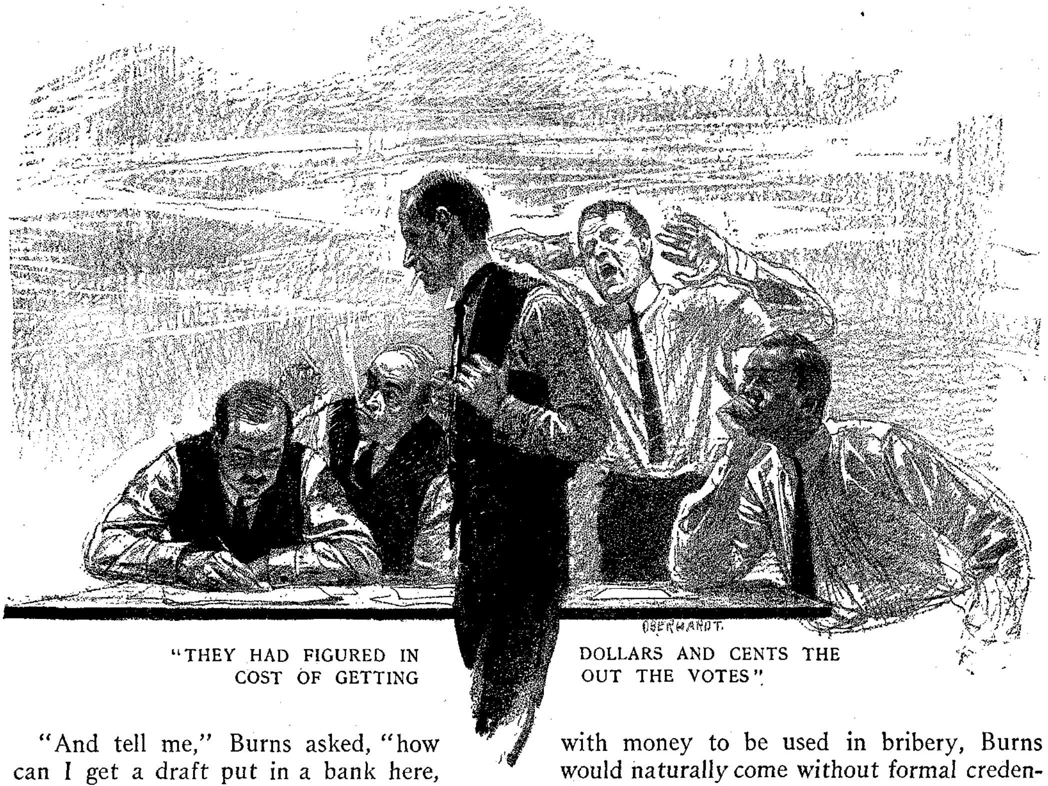
Morse pushed up his hat-brim with the flat of his thumb. "If you're going to get any results," he said, "you want this fund to go where it'll be expended honestly. My men are loyal to *me*. They'll handle the money right if they get it from *me*. But ——"

"Let me tell you," Burns interrupted. "This is my regular business, and I can pretty well size a man up. Of course, I want you to refer me to men who won't steal it from me, but I can take care of myself to some extent. I expect to be back this way again, and I want to establish a permanent connection in the State."

Morse shot up one eyebrow speculatively. "Well," he said, "I can give you the names of the men, if that's all you want, but ——"

"Of course," Burns put in suavely, "on election day things are likely to come up that will make it necessary to use some money quickly. I'd like to leave a fund with you, personally, if you ——"

"That's a good idea, too."



"THEY HAD FIGURED IN DOLLARS AND CENTS THE COST OF GETTING OUT THE VOTES"

"And tell me," Burns asked, "how can I get a draft put in a bank here, collected, and held for me, without showing where the money comes from?"

"Buy a draft made out to cash in New York," Morse advised, "and deposit it here in your name."

"Have you a bank that you can introduce me to?"

Morse nodded.

"How much do you think would be sufficient for election day contingencies? Would thirty thousand dollars cover it?"

"Nicely. Nicely," Morse answered, with more warmth.

"Of course," Burns confided, "I have to be mighty careful. It'd hurt us if it became known that we were coming into the State this way. I don't want the name of the League used at all."

"Naturally."

"As far as my dealings with your men are concerned, I want all that to be a personal matter. If they can use the money, that's all I want to know. Can they use the money? And how much can they use? I'll see that they get it."

Listing the "Trustworthy" Men

In asking for the names of trustworthy machine men in doubtful districts, Burns was asking for nothing that could arouse suspicion in Morse; it was information that might have been obtained in many ways. As a political agent, with money to be used in bribery, Burns would naturally come without formal credentials, with no extensive explanations, so that in the event of an investigation there might be no need of perjury to conceal the origin of the corruption fund. And as a practical man, in a dishonest way of life, he would expect that Morse would take a "rake-off" from his contingency fund of thirty thousand dollars, just as he himself would be suspected by Morse of keeping what he wished out of the rest. He was not asking any questions or prying into any political secrets. He was desirous only of remaining in careful obscurity himself, while his money worked blindly for him and for the established order of prosperity in the political world.

Morse accepted him on those terms, and they got down to work. They listed the doubtful districts and the "trustworthy" men in them; and Morse helped to lay out Burns' itinerary for him, and even telephoned to announce the approach of "Mr. Hicks" to a number of the politicians. It developed, in the course of conversation, that Morse expected the election to be close; that an unusually large campaign fund was being collected; that the assistance of the Liberal League would be altogether welcome and timely.

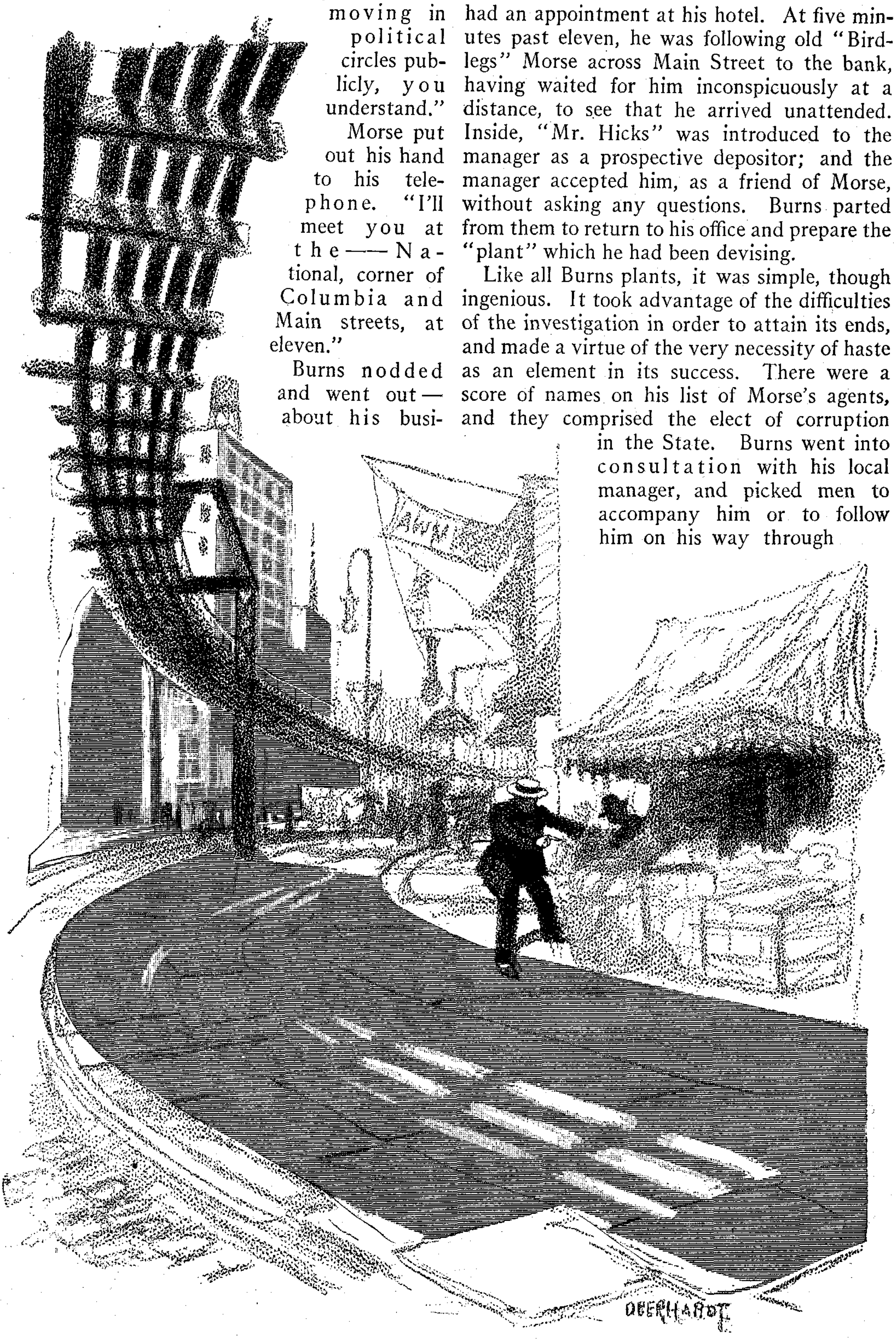
"You want me to take you to the bank," he suggested.

"No," Burns replied; "but if you can go there at eleven o'clock this morning, I'll meet you. I'm not moving in political circles publicly, you understand."

Morse put out his hand to his telephone. "I'll meet you at the —— National, corner of Columbia and Main streets, at eleven."

Burns nodded and went out — about his business. He had to receive a client with whom he had an appointment at his hotel. At five minutes past eleven, he was following old "Bird-legs" Morse across Main Street to the bank, having waited for him inconspicuously at a distance, to see that he arrived unattended. Inside, "Mr. Hicks" was introduced to the manager as a prospective depositor; and the manager accepted him, as a friend of Morse, without asking any questions. Burns parted from them to return to his office and prepare the "plant" which he had been devising.

Like all Burns plants, it was simple, though ingenious. It took advantage of the difficulties of the investigation in order to attain its ends, and made a virtue of the very necessity of haste as an element in its success. There were a score of names on his list of Morse's agents, and they comprised the elect of corruption in the State. Burns went into consultation with his local manager, and picked men to accompany him or to follow him on his way through



"AGENTS IN THE DOUBTFUL DISTRICTS HAD BEGUN TO REPORT SUSPICIOUS INCIDENTS OF 'TAILINGS' AND ACCOMPANIED WHERE HE HAD the State. Then he set out on his quiet but expected progress from district to district, consulting with Morse's agents, learning the amount that each could "use" out of the three hundred thousand dollars, and preparing each for the arrival of a man with the money who should introduce himself merely as "the fellow who was told to see you."

Burns Disappears

Burns' operatives, following him at a decent interval, introduced themselves to the proper men by means of this formula, and made a great show of money. They were accepted with alacrity. They were given the entrée to the most shadily select circles of practical politics, and they devoted themselves to the work of cultivating acquaintances and studying the best investments in local corruption. And, having engaged his staff on the building and setting of this trap for Morse, Burns sent word to the Progressives that he had taken up the investigation with a good prospect of success, and then he disappeared from Columbia to attend to some pressing affairs in Chicago and the Middle West.

He was gone almost a week—swinging around the circle of his offices, with a score of cases working out under his supervision, directing his operatives, dictating cipher telegrams, receiving his reports by mail and long-distance telephone, interviewing clients, breaking down criminals, consulting with a Chief of Police here and a District Attorney there, evading reporters in one city and receiving them cheerfully in the next, coming to the surface of affairs to speak at a public dinner and disappearing again to sleep with his head on his satchel in an all-night ride in a day-coach—always alert and busy, with relays of clothes and linen awaiting him at hotel desks, and with desk-clerks and head waiters and switch-board operators greeting him discreetly in a friendly confidence that puts a circle of protection about him like an invisible body-guard wherever he goes.

When he returned to Columbia, the reports from his "political workers" showed that the trap was ready to be sprung. He called up Morse on the telephone. "This is Hicks," he said. "I want to see you right away. It's important."

Burns Springs His Trap

And Morse, expecting the arrival of money, said cordially: "Come right over; I'll be here."

The laconic "Birdlegs" even greeted Burns with a friendly "Good morning. How are you?" when the detective came into the private office; and Burns answered worriedly: "I don't feel good."

"Why, what's the matter?" Morse asked.

Burns frowned at him. "Didn't you know that this State's full of detectives?"

"This State? Full of detectives?"

"Yes. These cursed reformers have got them here. They've put them all over the place."

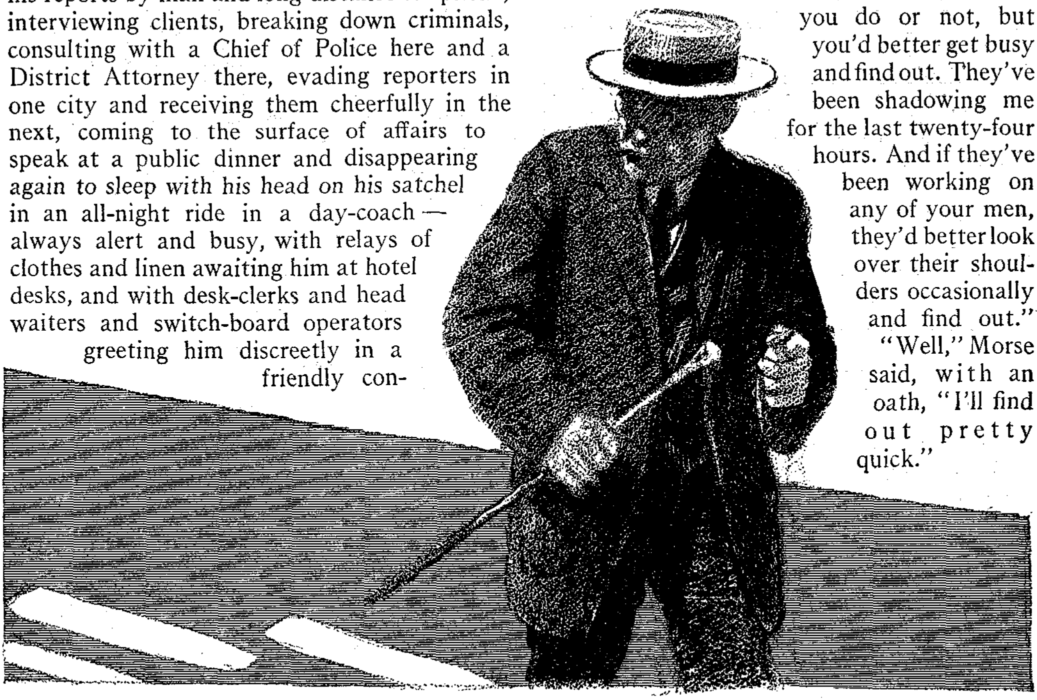
"Who threw that scare into you?"

"I had to pay to find it out. The head of the —— Agency's in charge of it. They're going to turn the place upside down. They say they've got all the big fellows hooked, and they're going to grab off every one of them."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"I don't care whether you do or not, but you'd better get busy and find out. They've been shadowing me for the last twenty-four hours. And if they've been working on any of your men, they'd better look over their shoulders occasionally and find out."

"Well," Morse said, with an oath, "I'll find out pretty quick."



'SHADOWINGS.' ONE PROMINENT MACHINE MAN HAD BEEN WORRIED BY FINDING HIMSELF DISTANTLY WISHED TO GO ALONE"

Burns wiped his forehead. "You can't make it too quick for me. I don't want them to grab me off. I ran into this sort of thing out on the coast, and I don't want any more of it. I'm going to hole up." Morse had reached for his telephone. "I'll be in here to-morrow."

A Badly Frightened Boss

Morse was already impatiently calling central, and Burns knew what reports he would hear from his men. For the agents of Hicks in the doubtful districts had begun reporting suspicious incidents of "tailings" and "shadowings" to their friends the corruptionists; and these corruptionists themselves were being watched and followed by operatives who were not too careful to remain unseen. Two were even sleuthing after Morse, and one prominent machine man in the capital had been worried by finding himself distantly accompanied where he had wished to go alone.

Burns went down to the southern part of the State overnight, to help round up a gang of yeggmen who had been burglarizing country banks. It was not until the afternoon of the following day that he returned to the capital city, learned that Morse was in his office (from the shadow who was "working on" Morse), and went at once to call.

And Morse was not glad to see him. "You'd better not be coming around here," he said.

"Was I right?" Burns asked, in alarm. "Are they on to me?"

"We don't know *who* they're on to. They've been working all over the State, and we don't know how long they've been at it. Our boys have been entertaining one of them down at the Club, without knowing it. He disappeared as soon as they began to ask him questions, and we don't know how much he got. They're all over. You can't turn around in the dark without bumping into them. We don't know *where* we're at!"

Burns' Money Goes Begging

"That's enough," Burns said. "I'm off. I don't want to take any chances. I'd like to leave some of this money, though — if you think you could get it out safely."

"Safely!"

"Well, I thought, if I turned it over to you ——"

Morse swore eloquently. "If they caught one of those fellows with the goods on him, they'd let him go if he'd give up the man above him. And how long do you think it would take to reach me? If you're going to hand out any money at this election, you'll have to stand at the polls and do it yourself. I've warned the boys that they needn't expect anything from *me*. You can give them your money if you want to, but they're bigger fools than I take them for if they pass it on."

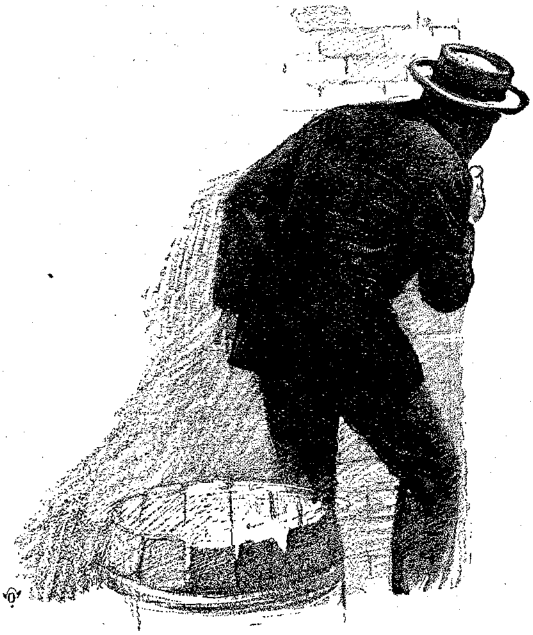
"Well," Burns said, "I hate to lay down on this thing ——"

"You can do as you please about that," Morse replied, "but don't you come back here. I don't want you around. They're watching this office. Go on, now, and don't come back. I'm busy."

Burns went — with every appearance of reluctance. He interviewed some of the local corruptionists, by stealth, in the manner of a hunted man with whom it was dangerous to be seen, and he spread the alarm diligently. All over the State his men were doing the same. They had money to give away, but they were afraid to give it; and the political workers were afraid to take it. On the eve of election day an anonymous report was sent out by telephone that some of these frightened bribers were themselves detectives, and the panic was complete.

"The Easiest Man to Bluff Is the Man Who Does the Most Bluffing"

Morse, on election day, shut himself up in the Columbia Club and denied himself even to the



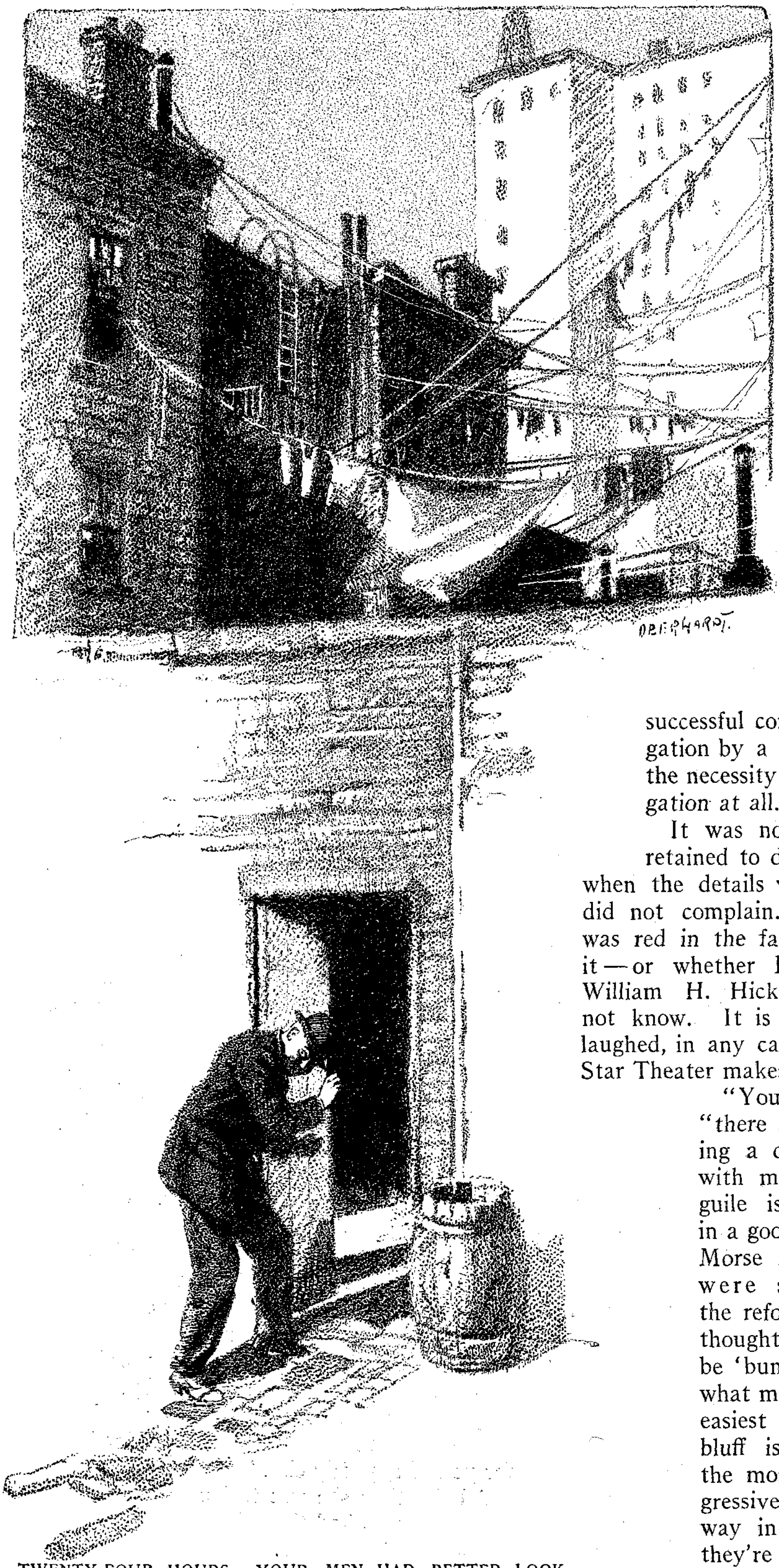
"'THEY'VE BEEN SHADOWING ME FOR THE LAST
OVER THEIR SHOULDERS

telephone. Burns says: "The old crook was so frightened that he didn't dare to go near enough to the polls to vote." The money necessary "to get out the vote" for the corruptionists was not forthcoming. Theirs was the sort of vote that does not go to the ballot-box unless it is paid. And the Progressives of Columbia elected their Governor and carried the State.

There was no need to unseat anybody. Burns had attained the successful conclusion of his investigation by a short cut that avoided the necessity of making the investigation at all.

It was not what he had been retained to do; but Major Walker, when the details were reported to him, did not complain. He laughed till he was red in the face. How Morse took it — or whether he ever learned who William H. Hicks was — Burns does not know. It is not likely that Morse laughed, in any case. His record at the Star Theater makes it improbable — very.

"You see," Burns says, "there are other ways of killing a dog besides choking it with melted butter. A little guile isn't out of place even in a good reform campaign. Morse and his machine men were so used to 'bunking' the reformers that they never thought the reformers might be 'bunking' them. That is what made them so easy. The easiest man in the game to bluff is the man who does the most bluffing. The Progressives have it all their own way in that State now, and they're making it a State to be proud of."



TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. YOUR MEN HAD BETTER LOOK OCCASIONALLY'"

"CQ"
IN THE WIRELESS HOUSE

BY

ARTHUR TRAIN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. M. CROSBY

What happened in preceding instalments. — *Micky Fitzgerald, a younger son of the English aristocracy, is in love with the Hon. Evelyn Farquhar and she with him; but her grandfather, the Earl, dismisses Micky, and Micky leaves England and becomes a wireless operator. At the time the story opens, he is wireless man on the "Pavonia," bound for New York. On board the ship are Mrs. Trevelyan, a famous beauty and London society favorite, an Englishman traveling second class under the name of Cloud, and a brother and sister, William Bennett and Miss Bennett, also second-class passengers.*

Micky receives a wireless reporting the murder of the Earl of Roakby and the disappearance of Cosmo Graeme, youngest son of Lord Varricks, who is suspected of the murder. By the description Micky recognizes Cloud as the man. Before he has had time to act on the discovery he overhears a conversation between Graeme and Mrs. Trevelyan disclosing that Graeme is engaged to the Hon. Evelyn. Graeme, in a moment of despondency, tries to throw himself overboard, but Micky saves him and promises Mrs. Trevelyan to suppress the wireless. In the meantime he has received two other wireless messages affecting passengers on the "Pavonia"— one for Mrs. Trevelyan warning her against trying to smuggle in her $50,000 pearl necklace, and another reporting an embezzlement from the Bank of Edinburgh and requesting a search for the embezzler on American-bound liners.

X

A GENTLE southern breeze, warmed by the bright rays of the September sun, fanned Mrs. Trevelyan's straying yellow curls as she sat outside the door of her state-room and idly turned the pages of the European edition of an American monthly. A shadow fell across the pages, and Captain Ponsonby made his appearance at her side.

"I want your bright eyes to help me do some detective work!" he whispered. "There may be a criminal on board!"

Under the veil of her golden smile Lily Trevelyan's radiant color fled. Something had gone wrong — the news had leaked out! Could Micky have tricked her? For an instant she was disinclined to accept such a possibility; then, as it seemed clear to her that there was no other way for the facts to have become known, she decided that Micky had simply taken her in with his childlike, guileless face and made a fool of her. And there leaped into her breast a fierce hatred of him — less because of what he had done than because she, whose business in life was to deceive, had been deceived.

"A criminal?" she repeated innocently. "How interesting!"

"Yes — isn't it! Of course he may not be on my ship. But they traced him to the Continent. Perhaps he came aboard at Gib." The Captain's face betrayed ill-suppressed excitement.

"What has the poor man done?" asked Lily.

"Ah!" the Captain remarked teasingly, "that would be telling! However, I'll say this much — that *you* would be particularly interested if you knew who the man was and whom he had wronged."

"You don't mean to suggest that I am personally acquainted with this — criminal!" Lily flashed, with simulated indignation.

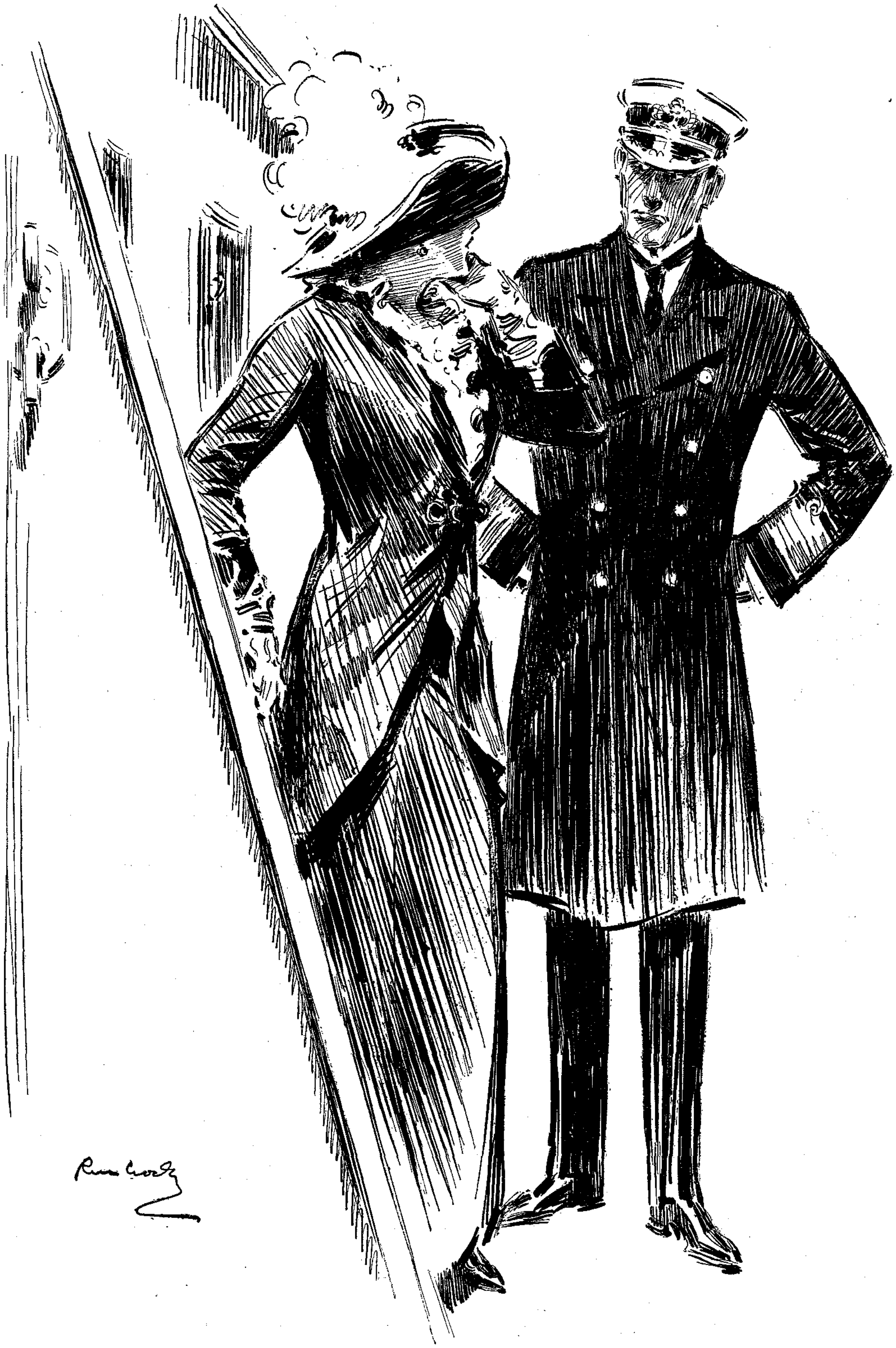
Ponsonby smiled again.

"Perhaps," he said significantly.

Lily took up her magazine.

"I don't think you are at all nice," she pouted. "First you ask me to help find a criminal for you, and then it turns out that you imagine he or she is one of my personal friends. Anyhow, you don't think I'd turn traitor, do you? My dear Captain Ponsonby, even if there were a murderer on board, and I knew him — I'd never tell. I won't be a bloodhound for you or anybody else."

All the time she was furiously raging inside at Micky, who had thus played her false. And then it burst upon her. What an idiot she had been! To think that a common little red-haired



"'COSMO GRAEME?' HE REPEATED. 'WHO ON EARTH IS COSMO GRAEME? I'M LOOKING FOR A MAN NAMED CHILVERS, WHO'S ROBBED YOUR HUSBAND'S BANK OF FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS'" beast like Fitzpatrick could or would do the decent thing, when he was, or foolishly fancied that he was, in love with the same girl as Cosmo Graeme. Why, it was his one great chance! Turn Cosmo over to the law, and Micky could go on making love to Evelyn Farquhar, and perhaps either persuade her into a vulgar intrigue or stir up such a scandal that the Earl would be compelled to buy him off. And as Lily Trevelyan was ready to believe the worst of anybody and did believe the worst of most people, she then and there stigmatized Micky as a rotten little sneak and consigned him to the lowest depths of the inferno.

A tiger-like resolve to stand by Cosmo to the last possessed her. If they took him, it should be not because of her but in spite of her. She almost forgot the Captain for the moment, but he answered her question and stood his ground.

"My dear Mrs. Trevelyan," said he reprovingly, "I didn't mean to suggest that this criminal might be your friend — I only said you might *know* him. Don't you want to stroll around the ship and see what we can do in the Sherlock Holmes line?"

It suddenly occurred to Lily that it was conceivably possible that if she went with Ponsonby she might somehow be able to divert his attention or throw him off the track.

"Certainly I'll go with you," she answered quite cordially, getting up and throwing the magazine into the seat of her deck-chair. "By the way, you haven't told me what your criminal has done."

"This way!" bowed the Captain. "No, Mrs. Trevelyan; I want to give you a little surprise — if we identify the man. And you *will* be surprised! If we don't find him on board, I'll tell you all about it afterward."

Feeling that it would be unwise, for Cosmo's sake, to show too great an interest in either the identity of the criminal or the details of his crime, Lily walked along the deck with the Captain toward the reading-saloon.

"Extraordinary, isn't it!" continued Ponsonby confidentially, "how we are able to keep in constant touch with England? I receive all the news, as you know, every morning. Now, this man had no sooner committed his offense than I knew all about it, and the directors at once wired me personally to look over the ship and see if I couldn't pick out the fellow among the passengers. I won't tell you who he is — but I'll give you his description and ask you to help me." (He pulled out a slip of paper and studied it.) "'Tall, clean-shaven when last seen, blue eyes, brown hair, hollow cheeks, aquiline nose.' Ought not to be difficult, ought it? There can't be many fellows on board all exactly like that, can there?"

Again Lily felt the blood leave her face. Yes, it was Cosmo fast enough. Micky had played fast and loose with her.

"If there is any one on board who fits the description you will surely have no difficulty in finding him," said Lily. "Where are you going first?"

"Let's take a look into the reading-saloon," said Ponsonby, who wanted as many of the passengers as possible to see that he had been honored above all men. He stalked along with her, whispering intimately, and touching his cap in all directions. But there was nobody on deck who fitted the description, and in the reading-saloon were only the Boston bride and her husband, playing an exclusive game of piquet, and three old women who were writing exhaustive narratives in their diaries of the astonishing things one saw on the Champs Elysées.

"There are no burglars or murderers concealed in here," said Ponsonby. "Let's take a turn on the second-cabin deck."

They proceeded toward the second-cabin deck, and, as luck would have it, they had no sooner reached the bottom of the companionway than they met Cosmo Graeme face to face. So unexpected was the encounter that instinctively he raised his hand to his hat and bowed to Lily, who gasped, flushed, and drew back.

Captain Ponsonby grasped her arm tight as Cosmo hurried by them without speaking.

"That's our man!" he whispered tensely. "The very man! You saw how he recognized you. Fits the description to a T."

But in the single moment required for the Captain to formulate this very obvious judgment Lily Trevelyan had recovered herself.

"I'm sorry to upset your theory, Captain Ponsonby," she replied in her usual bantering tone, "but I never saw that mournful-looking person before in my life. I'm sure, if I had, I should remember him — such a 'lean and hungry' Cassius as that!"

But the Captain, besides being an Englishman, was the czar of his ship, and more than usually obstinate. Besides, he regarded all women as having considerably less intelligence than dogs — and, in his experience, the better looking they happened to be the greater fools they were apt to prove.

"I can't help that," he answered, calm in the confidence of his own superiority of intellect. "That's our man. When you know more about the case you'll probably remember him! — even if you don't now."

Lily bit her lip. Ponsonby was not such an ass as she had always taken him for. The game was up. There was nothing she could do now but play for time, and, as far as possible, prevent Cosmo's immediate arrest and public disgrace.

They had crossed the second-cabin deck, with the apparent object on the Captain's part of asking Cloud's name of the second-cabin steward, when, a short way aft of the deck-house, they encountered Bennett and his sister walking in the opposite direction. This was the first time that Lily had noticed the couple; but, as the man had removed his hat in order to get the full benefit of the breeze, his face was brought out into sharp relief by the sunlight, and one glance at him told her that, as far as features and coloring were concerned, he fitted the description received by the Captain as well as Cosmo, if not better. Certainly he had blue eyes and an aquiline nose, and he was thin and hollow-cheeked; and yet, he was no more like Cosmo than the Duke of Wellington was like Napoleon Bonaparte. The intensity and directness of her gaze embarrassed both the girl and her brother, and the latter nervously raised his hand to his face, possibly as if to conceal it, then changed his mind in the act and touched his cap to the Captain.

"Good morning," said Ponsonby stiffly.

"Good morning, sir," answered Bennett confusedly.

Something about the man recalled in a vague fashion a long-forgotten impression to Lily,— she had a statesman's gift for faces,— a distant and not altogether pleasant recollection of her wedding to Trevelyan, with its crowds of relatives and acquaintances, its awkward congratulations and useless, ponderous gifts of glass and silver. Had she ever known this person? Had she perhaps seen him doing duty, in some ungainly and clownish fashion, on the occasion when the employees of the bank had presented her husband with a loving-cup — Ah, that was it! This must be the man who had made the speech of congratulation — had expressed in halting, insipid, and unconvincing phrase the regard in which these poor automatic machines held the autocrat who had lived by the sweat of their brows and the scratching of their quills. Yes, now she recalled him! He was the assistant cashier, who had come disjointedly forward at the wedding reception, and had made the "few remarks." Bennett saw that she recognized him, and his face changed color. Coincidentally Lily thought she saw a chance to divert the Captain's attention in a new direction, and as she squeezed his arm she bowed quickly to the man before her.

"How do you do?" she said in cordial tones. "It's a long time since we've met, Mr.——"

Bennett looked at her helplessly, with an expression of agonized entreaty.

"It's Mrs. Trevelyan — isn't it?" he stammered.

"Yes," she answered. "I'm glad to see you again. I forget your name."

The man opened his mouth as if to reply, but no sound came from his lips.

"Bennett," interjected the girl at his side hurriedly. "You must excuse us — my brother isn't feeling well."

Lily and the Captain passed on, the officer deep in his plans for the immediate arrest of Cloud. He was naturally exhilarated over his good fortune at so quickly identifying a celebrated criminal among his passengers, while Lily was furious at having everything go wrong. She resolved to take a desperate chance and to make a last and Herculean effort to put Ponsonby upon the wrong scent; so she turned to him, with a face full of childlike simplicity and candor, and said quietly:

"Captain Ponsonby, you noticed that person who just passed us, I presume? You saw the color of his eyes and hair? You observed that he recognized me? And I him. Well, that man — the man who called me by name — is the one you want — *Cosmo Graeme!*"

Captain Ponsonby turned upon her with an expression of utter bewilderment.

"Cosmo Graeme?" he repeated after her. "Who on earth is Cosmo Graeme? I'm looking for a man named Chilvers, who's robbed the London branch of your husband's bank of five thousand pounds!"

XI

On a somewhat murky afternoon about a week later, the Boston bride and groom, Lord Ashurst, and Mrs. Trevelyan were playing their customary afternoon game of bridge in the *Pavonia's* smoking-room.

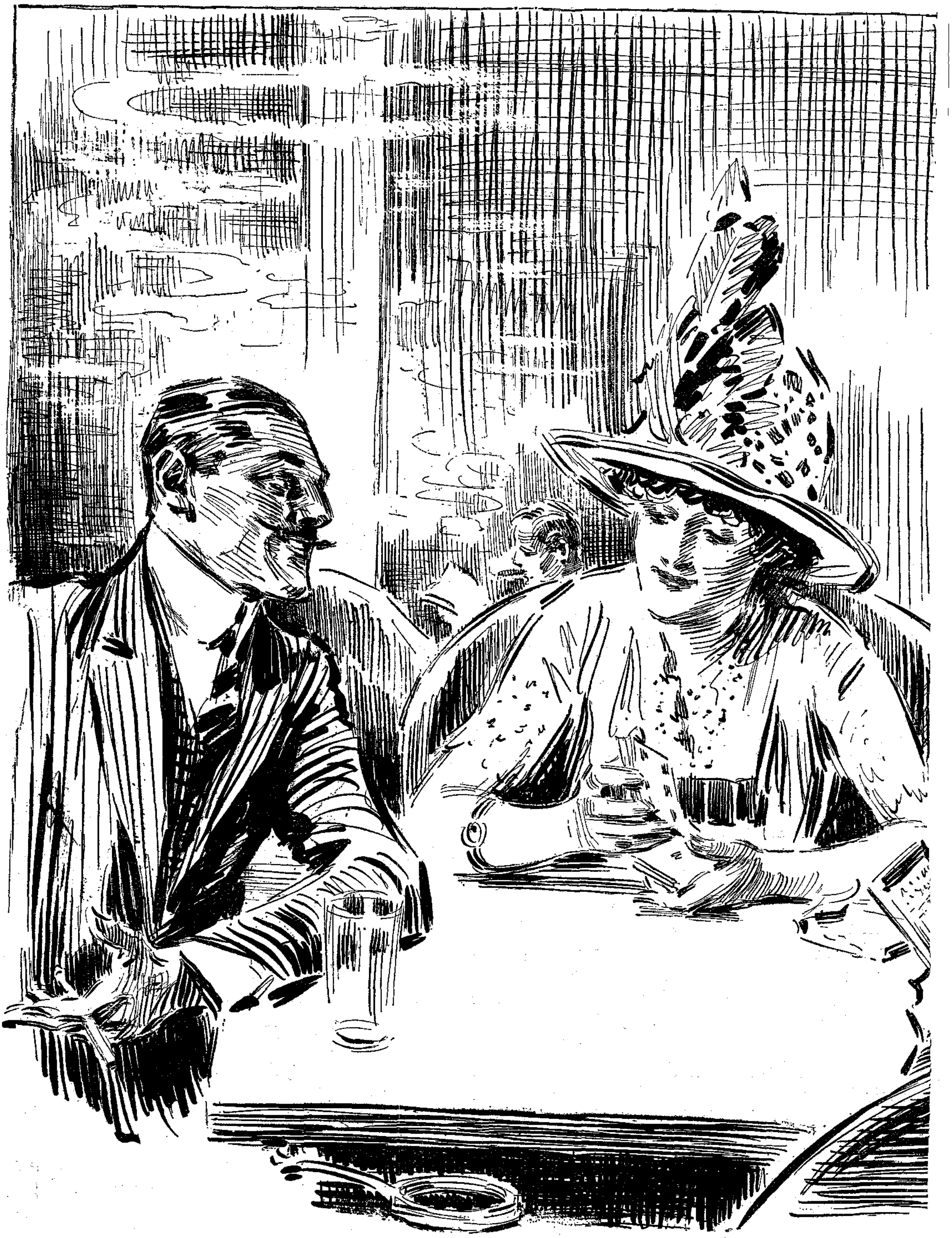
"Captain says we'll dock day after to-morrow," remarked Ashurst.

"Are you going to declare anything?" asked the bride of Lily.

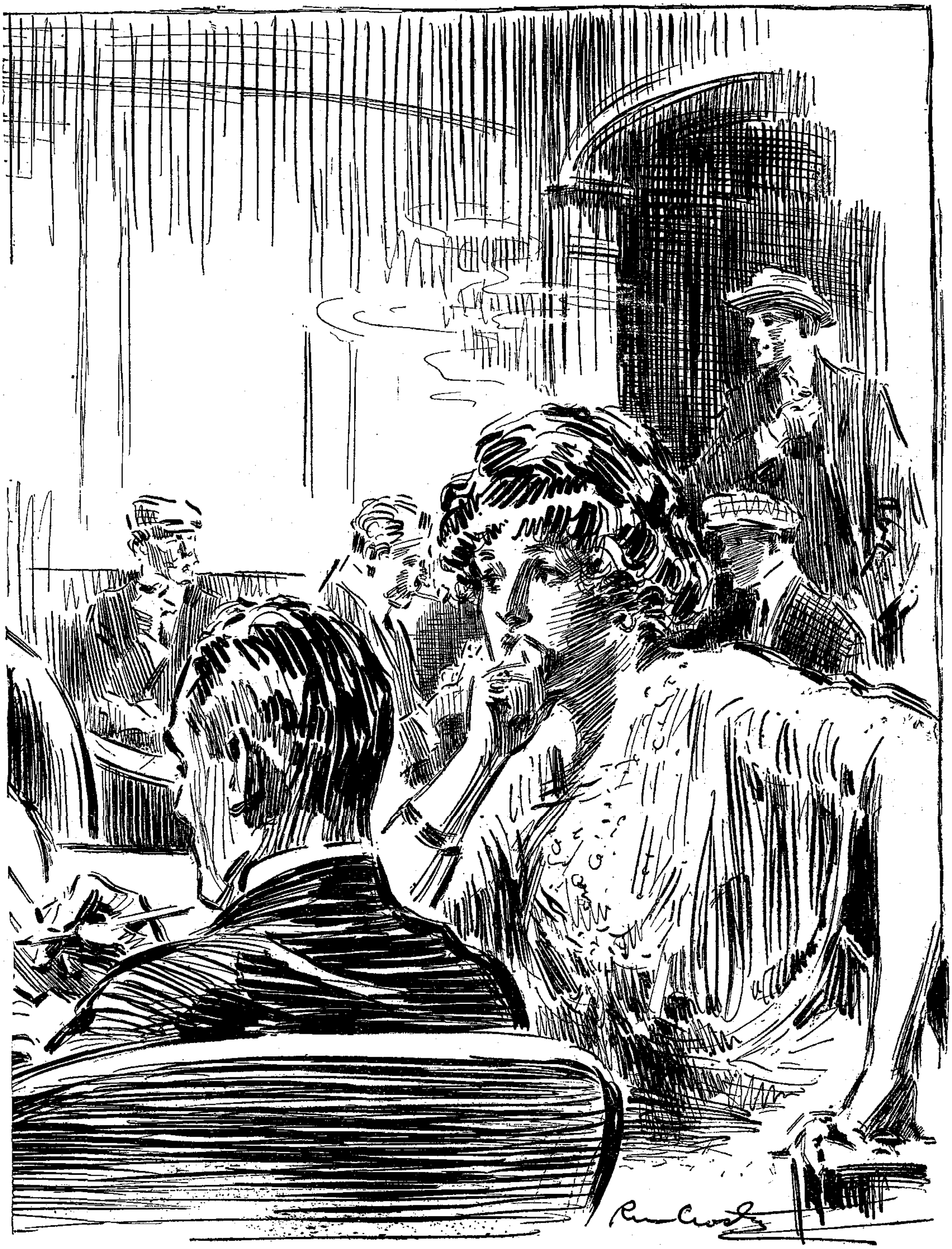
"I hadn't thought. Are you?" returned Mrs. Trevelyan.

"Well, really, I haven't anything in particular," replied the other. "A few dresses and some lace. I suppose I shall declare a dress or two. The lace I can slip into my camera. You can always take the inspector's name and address and send him something. Of course there isn't any *need* to declare anything — but I usually do, just for form's sake."

"What do you suppose the women do who really have a lot of things — jewelry, for instance?" asked Lily lazily. "Nobody ever



"'NOBODY EVER PAYS ON JEWELRY,' SAID THE BRIDE. 'IT'S SO EASY TO HIDE. HOW ON WHO HAD A PAIR OF PEARL EAR-RINGS—SHE TOOK HER HUSBAND'S CARTRIDGES INSTEAD OF POWDER.



EARTH COULD THEY EVER FIND A LOT OF LOOSE DIAMONDS OR PEARLS? I HAD A FRIEND REVOLVER, EMPTIED OUT THE SHELLS, AND PUT THE PEARLS IN THE WASN'T THAT NEAT?'"

pays on anything as far as I can see. But suppose the inspectors really *looked?*"

"Why, as you say, nobody ever pays on jewelry," said the bride. "It's so easy to hide. How on earth could they ever find a lot of loose diamonds or pearls? I had a friend that did an awfully clever thing once — wasn't it, Lawrence? She had a pair of pearl ear-rings,— oh, great big ones,— and her husband had some shirt studs, worth over fifteen thousand dollars all together. She couldn't think *what* to do at first, and then she had a brilliant idea — she's *awfully* clever. They took his revolver, and emptied out the shells, and put the pearls in the cartridges instead of powder, and placed the bullets on top of them, just as they were in the beginning. Wasn't that neat?"

"Diabolical!" assented Lily.

"I knew a chap that invented something better than that," put in Ashurst. "You know, there aren't any inspectors around after everybody has left the ship. Well, this fellow was bringing in a pearl necklace for his wife — cost nearly twenty thousand dollars. He didn't declare anything and walked right through the inspectors. A couple of days later he went down to the office of the company and got a card to go over and look at the ship, which was lying at the dock with only a few of the crew on board. The chap at the gangway let him up, and he found a steward who unlocked his state-room for him. Then he got the necklace, which he'd hidden there, and brought it ashore — no questions asked."

"Where'd he hide it?" inquired Lily.

"Why," said Ashurst, "you know those ventilators for the forced draught? Well, he just tied a string to it and lowered it in. No one would think of looking for anything there, would they?"

"I think he took a good many chances!" remarked the bride decidedly. "What's the matter with getting one of the officers or a stewardess to bring anything you happen to have ashore for you? Nobody ever searches *them.*"

"By George! there you go!" laughed Ashurst. "It's always the women who corrupt the men! I say, are we going to play any more?"

"Oh, let's cut it out!" said Lily. "I think I'll go out and stroll round a bit."

She got up and crossed the deck to her state-room, where Fantine had drawn the easy-chair close to the door, and rather disgustedly she threw herself into it, directing the maid to order some tea from the steward. The whole day had been a failure from start to finish, and it was now five o'clock and almost over. Ever since her ridiculous break with the Captain the week before — a break due to her foolish readiness to believe that Micky had deceived her — she had felt utterly out of patience with herself.

Not that she was particularly to blame. How was *she* to know there had been an embezzlement at the Bank of Edinburgh in addition to the Roakby affair, one following close on the heels of the other, and that Scotland Yard had sent out descriptions of both fugitives? And poor little Micky! What an injustice she had done him! The boy was a trump — as she had always thought! He had mentioned nothing to her about the Bank of Edinburgh. But why should he? He probably didn't know that her husband was connected with it, and it was the most natural thing in the world for her to have assumed that if the Captain was looking for anybody he *must* be looking for Cosmo. But her *ridiculous* lie! And her bungled, half-hearted, and altogether unconvincing excuse to Ponsonby that she was trying to mix him up just for fun! Just for fun! She wouldn't try any such fun again — at any rate, not with *him!* He was through with her, that was clear enough; and he had not come down into the saloon to a single meal since she had so foolishly tried to make him think that Chilvers was Cosmo Graeme.

Now the whole ship was talking of the extraordinary coincidence by which she had stumbled upon the very man who had robbed her husband's bank! It had made a terrific sensation, particularly when the officers had taken him and locked him in his state-room. Cosmo was still free to come and go as he chose. But for how long? Only until the pilot should come aboard with his bundle of papers, and the Captain should read all about it, and begin to wonder why on earth he hadn't heard of it before. Then he'd know he had Cosmo Graeme on board, for she had told him so — fool that she was! And Cosmo would either have to jump overboard or be thrown into irons! And *she* was to blame for it! No one else.

Everything was going wrong. There was her necklace — what was she going to do with that? She must decide shortly or she would certainly have to pay the duty on it. Thirty thousand dollars! She couldn't pay any such sum — it would be too ridiculous. Yet, after what Fantine had told her about the stringency with which the regulations were being enforced, she had no wish to try to smuggle it in herself. Thirty thousand dollars duty? It would be a fortune for some people! And then the conversation in the smoking-room came back to her, and she wondered if she couldn't get somebody on the ship to take the necklace in for her — Micky, perhaps. If he didn't want to do it at first, *she'd* persuade him.

"Fantine!" she called sharply.

"*Oui*, madame," answered the maid.

"I wish you to put my necklace in a cardboard box, if you can find one, and do it up carefully in a piece of paper."

"*Oui*, madame," replied Fantine. "I can use the box for madame's ruching."

"Yes, that will do," said Lily. "Mind you tie it up neatly, in the smallest possible parcel."

"I might as well take a chance!" she muttered. "If Micky won't do it for me, perhaps I can cook up some other way of getting it in!"

She sighed, feeling unconsciously the fall of the barometer. What a muddle she'd made of life! Here she was getting to middle age, with not a soul who really cared for her in the entire world. Why hadn't she married some decent young fellow out of the hundreds she might have had during her first seasons in London, instead of losing her head and running amuck the way she had done? God only knew what she had expected then. Nothing had seemed too high for her to attain. There were dukes she might have had if she had only played her hand more carefully, more conservatively. But she had *over*played; and now, at the end of the game, what had she won? Nothing! Nothing that gave her the slightest satisfaction — except that which she still derived from the remnants of her beauty. She bit her lips fiercely. She was still young! She would not grow old! She would play the game until the candles grew dim, and then — she shrugged her shoulders and closed her eyes.

The light faded out of the west and the wind rose, while a gull squeaked harshly with a sound like the chalking of a billiard cue, and shot aslant the wind a few feet from the rail before her like a bird of evil omen. Two old maids, staggering by to get up an appetite for the evening meal, cast sidelong glances at her as she lay with her head thrown back in the light cast by the electric bracket inside her window.

"That's her," whispered one. "*I* don't see anything in her at all."

"Nor I!" echoed the other raspingly. "She looks like an old woman!"

They passed, and a spat of rain struck Lily in the face. Wearily she arose from her steamer-chair and entered her drawing-room. There were dark circles under her eyes.

"Fantine!" she cried, with clenched hands, "get my best evening dress out of the wardrobe. Yes, the Paquin one, with the foulard skirt and the chiffon trimming."

XII

THE barometer had been falling steadily all the afternoon. But nothing could lower the mercury of Captain Ponsonby's good humor. By gad, he'd made a hit! His name would be on the front pages of the papers that the pilot would bring on board to-morrow afternoon. As he strode up and down on the bridge, still smoking, the fact that a northeast storm was on its way did not worry him in the least.

"Going to be a wet night, Simmons!"

"Yes, sir," said Simmons. "It's beginning to rain already," he added.

It was the same advance gust of drops that had driven Mrs. Trevelyan into her cabin. As the light died out of the west an army of clouds swept down upon the ship, bearing in their wake a solid bank of fog. The Captain stepped to the speaking-tube and ordered Binks to bring up his rubber coat.

"I'll take this watch, Simmons," he said gruffly.

Darkness — black, dense, impenetrable — had come with the fog, and the search-light striking against that barrier of mist and rain was thrown back and upward at arm's length, as if a burglar's lantern were reflected from a wall.

"Let go the whistle every ten minutes," called down the Captain through the speaking-tube; and in another moment the ship trembled to the hoarse vibration of the fog-horn.

Then Ponsonby, his glistening purple face stinging with the cutting rain, his eyes burrowing fiercely into the black night, his red ears listening for every sound above the seething of the waves and the lashing of the storm, uncernedly minding his own regular business, rose in stature from being a ponderous ass into a high and efficient type of man, to whom we should be glad to trust our lives.

Meantime Lily Trevelyan had intended, with the assistance of Fantine, to complete *une grande toilette* — her challenge to the flat-chested maiden ladies of whose acerbity she had been so unfortunately a victim as she sat on deck. Her dressing-room blazed with electricity — in sharp contrast to the blackness outside. Her bath, gently lapping the porcelain edges of the tub (as the *Pavonia* began to throw up her nose against the storm), was faintly scented with rose-water. Diaphanous linen things as soft as silk and as thin lay in lacy piles on a wicker chair. A huge gold powder-puff box was open upon the dresser. A pair of chamois slippers edged with fur had been placed conveniently by the bath. Two soft, thick towels hung from the glass rod, with a dozen embroidered linen ones. And across the brass bed had been carefully laid out the foulard dress with the chiffon trimming — that is, if dress it could properly be called, since it resembled rather a sort of skirt with a couple of loops and a handful of gauze above.

"What a horrid night!" she cried irritably, swinging to the door with a bang that made the lights flicker in their sockets. "Fantine! Do you see any lines under my eyes?"

"*Mais, non!* Madame!" expostulated the maid, as she removed her mistress' coat and hat.

"I know you're lying to me!" she answered, throwing herself into the arm-chair before the mirror. "I'm getting old — and tired!"

"Madame!" cried Fantine. "You look but twenty! There is no one like you. But your bath is ready. Madame will dress?"

In the glass Lily saw the dragged look on her face that now came there so often. Any over-exertion, any nervousness or anxiety, any slight indisposition, might bring it — the dawn of old age. "Five years ago," she thought, "I could do anything! And *now!*" She turned away gloomily.

"I'll *show* them!" she cried angrily. "I'll show them whether I'm an old woman or not!"

And a moment later a gentle plashing in the next room told Fantine that her mistress was in her bath.

With the first dash of rain Micky had scuttled for the wireless house. As he threw on his mains his "CQ" caught Cape Cod, the *Berlin* just entering the Narrows, and a dozen or so other ingoing and outgoing liners. He passed the time of day and the weather with all of them. In every case the answer was the same: fog like cheese from Cape Sable to Hatteras — *had* been for two days. And, before he knew it, Micky found that the *Pavonia* had herself plunged into the bank and had slackened her speed.

Then came the deluge — at first a spatter and scurry on the top of the deck-house; then a prolonged roll as from a hundred snare-drums; and then the rain really came, sweeping in steady sheets against the windows, lashing the top of the deck-house, rattling and shaking his windows and driving a steady stream of water under the tightly closed door.

"Sufferin' ducks!" he whistled. "This is some water — *what?*"

It was no easy task for him to keep his footing on the ladder when, at last, he decided to go down to dinner, in response to an instinctive feeling that the passengers who sat at his table were somehow entitled to his encouragement. As he made the corner of the deck-house, a small figure emerged from one of the passageways and caught his arm. It was the Bennett girl.

"Oh, Mr. Fitzpatrick!" she cried. "I'm so frightened! Is there any danger?"

"No, of course not!" he answered cheerily.

"Oh —" she began. Then suddenly she gave way and began to sob pitifully.

"Poor little girl!" exclaimed Micky, touched to the quick. "Poor little girl!"

Before he knew it he had taken her in his arms, and she was crying hysterically with her head on his shoulder.

"By George! *This* won't do!" he thought. "Suppose somebody should walk in on the party unexpectedly?"

"Look here, Miss Bennett," he said soothingly. "I'm afraid we'll have to go somewhere else. You've had a hard time. You're all unstrung. But try and brace up!"

The girl attempted to restrain her sobs, but without success.

"I'm all alone!" she cried brokenly. "They won't even let me see my brother! and the storm frightened me so."

"Oh, I say!" cried Micky, "you don't mean old Ponsonby refuses to let you talk to him?"

"Yes," she answered. "Not a word can pass between us. I haven't a soul to speak to; I don't know anybody! And I don't know what to do!"

"Poor child!" exclaimed Micky. "Well, you just do as I tell you. We've got to talk, that's sure. Of course I can't go to your state-room, but you come on up to the wireless house and take a nip of brandy and tell me all about it."

"Ought I?" she stammered. "You're the only person who's been kind to me on the whole boat. Since it all happened I've hardly left my state-room."

Micky preceded his guest up the ladder, and placed a chair for her by the steam-pipes. Then he poured out a tiny sip of brandy and handed it to her.

"Do you good," he said, smiling.

She drank the brandy obediently, and wiped her eyes.

"Oh," she said, "you don't know what it is to have *one* person kind to you when you're in trouble. And we *are* in trouble! Of course — why, *you're* the person that knows most about it, for it must have come by wireless."

Micky nodded grimly.

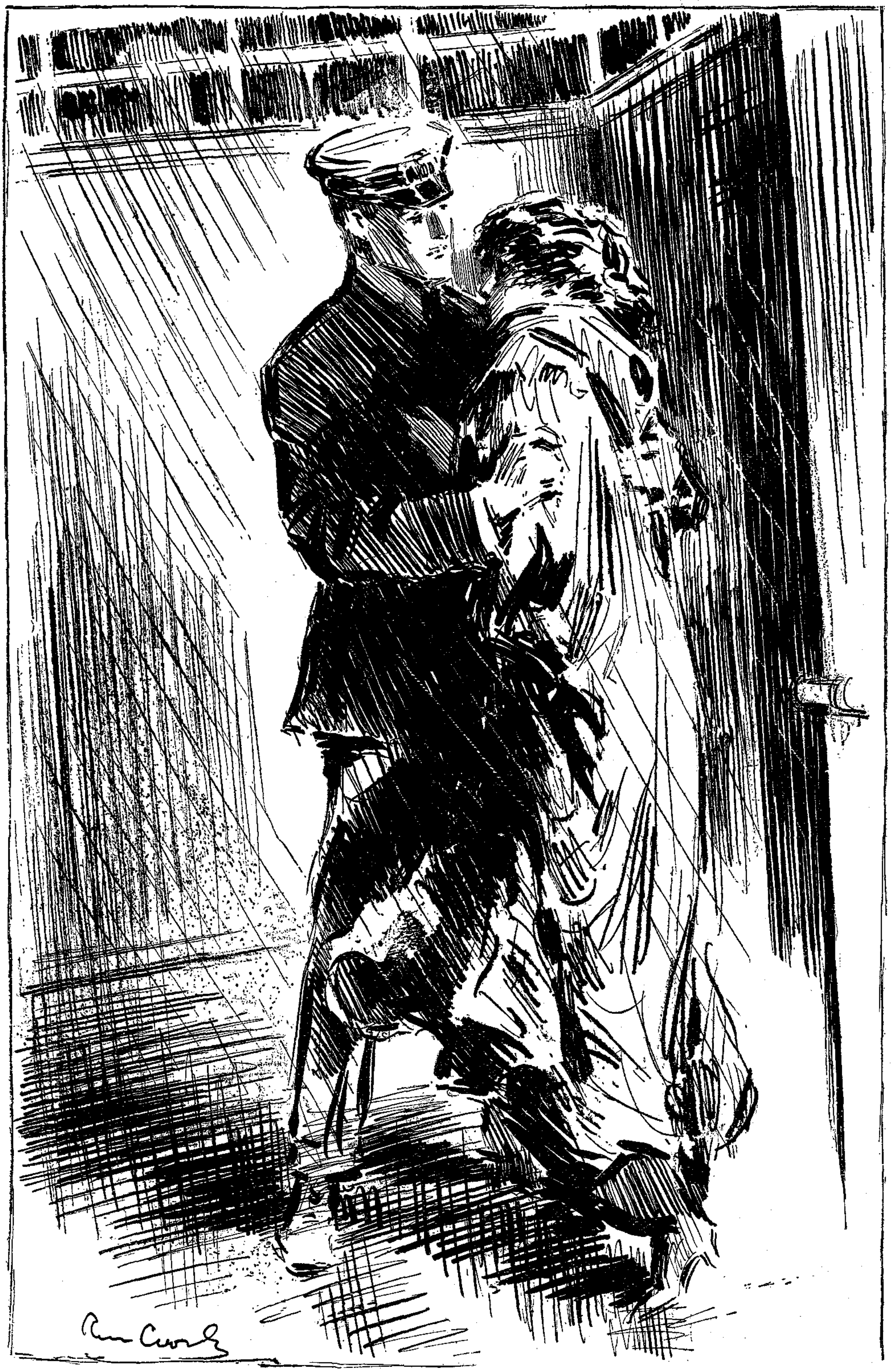
"Yes," he said; "it came that way. But it wouldn't have made any difference; they'd have caught him in New York."

The girl began to cry again softly.

"He *would* do it!" she sobbed. "I told him no judge would sentence father if he knew why he'd done it — but Jim would do it!"

"*Who* — would do it?" inquired Micky. "Come, you might as well put some confidence in me and let me have the whole story."

"There's no particular story," she answered. "Father took the money to pay the doctors for mother and send her on the trip to Egypt. You see, he'd been employed there all his life, but he



"'POOR LITTLE GIRL!' EXCLAIMED MICKY. 'POOR LITTLE GIRL!' BEFORE HE KNEW IT HE HAD TAKEN HER IN HIS ARMS AND SHE WAS CRYING WILDLY WITH HER HEAD ON HIS SHOULDER" couldn't ask the bank for money. And Sir Penniston Crisp — the great specialist, you know — said mother must have all kinds of care — trained nurses, and so on, and travel. He said she'd die without them. Well, mother was sixty-one and father was sixty-seven, and we had only his salary — two hundred and fifty pounds a year — to live on. But one day he came home and said he'd had a bit of luck on the Exchange and mother could go abroad."

"I see!" said Micky.

"That was four years ago!" went on the girl, gaining confidence as she proceeded. "Mother went to Egypt with a trained nurse and spent the winter, and did the same thing the winters following. In the summer we took a cottage at Brighton and had the best specialists. It must have cost a pile of money. And all that time neither mother nor I ever suspected a thing."

"No; why should you?" interjected the listener.

"Then Jim — Jim Chilvers — I was engaged to be married to him ——"

She stopped suddenly and looked inquiringly at Micky.

"Sure — I understand," said Micky encouragingly.

"Jim came to me one day and said he'd found that father had taken the money from the bank — nearly five thousand pounds — by shifting the securities around some way. I don't understand those things. We were to have been married in a month, but Jim explained that they were going to have some kind of an investigation and that the bank would surely find it out."

She turned a white face to him. Outside, the rain beat a ghostly tattoo on the rattling panes.

"Now, Sir Penniston had said that *any* shock might kill mother, and Jim said that the disgrace would kill father, too — he's an old man, you know! There was nothing to do, he said, except for him — Jim — to shoulder the blame to save father. He said the only person who made any difference to him was *me*. As long as I knew he wasn't the ordinary sort of criminal, he didn't mind. Father wouldn't hear of it at first, but finally, on mother's account, he agreed to let me go with Jim. So two weeks ago we ran away to Paris — Mother thinks I'm on a visit in Scotland — and got married, and then took the train to Madrid and Gibraltar. There's a man on board who has followed us all the way from Paris. He sits at our table. Cloud is his name. And we were terribly afraid he was a detective. Perhaps he is. Maybe that is how Jim came to be arrested."

"No!" said Micky. "I know that man. He's *not* — a detective."

"Well," she continued, "that's the whole thing. Then that morning Jim and I met Mrs. Trevelyan and the Captain, and she recognized him. So there we were! And inside an hour Jim was locked up in his state-room under arrest, with orders from the Captain to let him talk to *nobody*. So everything's over!"

She looked at him helplessly.

"It *is* tough!" answered Micky, with sympathy.

"The hardest part of it all is being kept away from Jim! I don't know why Captain Ponsonby won't let me go to him — I'm all alone — no one to speak to ——"

"Look here!" said Micky. "You'd better go down now. I'll see what I can do. You can't tell. Perhaps everything will come out all right even yet. No one would *want* to punish him — unless it were the bank."

"Except the bank!" sighed the girl.

Micky opened the door. The rain had almost ceased, but the night was as thick as ever. He assisted her down the ladder and to her stateroom. On the opposite side of the narrow passage, one of the older stewards stood on guard at Bennett's door. He grinned sheepishly at Micky.

"Jim!" called the girl. "Jim!"

"Beg pardon, Miss!" interrupted the steward. "It's against orders!"

"It's an outrage!" retorted Micky. "Tell the Captain to go to — . . . Hello, there, Mr. Chilvers!"

"Jim! Jim!" repeated the girl hysterically. "Mr. Fitzpatrick is looking after me. Don't worry. I'm all right. Good night."

"I'll do the best I can for both of you!" added Micky. "Keep up your nerve!"

Then he turned to the steward.

"Now go and *tell* Ponsonby!" he cried wrathfully.

Micky, after bidding good night to Mrs. Chilvers, climbed up the ladder to the wireless house with many conflicting emotions, and lit a pipe. Poor Bennett! "Not the ordinary sort of criminal," the girl had said. The very words used by Graeme. "Not the ordinary sort." *Was* there any "ordinary sort" of criminal, he wondered? If you only knew the truth, wouldn't you always find some reason for their having done what they did — some extenuating circumstance, some excuse? No one really *wanted* to do wrong, he felt sure.

"I *wish* I could *help* these people!" he sighed, gazing out into the night through the water-stained windows.

"I wish I could help 'em!" he repeated. "And I wish I could do something for Graeme! Queer fix *all* around!"

TO BE CONTINUED

THE PRODIGAL

ARTHUR HOWARD'S OWN STORY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAY HAMBIDGE

This is a narrative of Mr. Howard's actual personal experiences told by himself. At the age of thirty-eight he had run through a fortune of half a million. He left New York $100,000 in debt, with $25 in his pocket. For a while he drifted about Boston, picking up a dollar or two by writing stray paragraphs for the newspapers. One day his eye was caught by the notice of the closing out of the Salem "Gazette." Howard's people had come from Salem. By noon that day he was in the town offering to buy the "Gazette." His offer was refused, and Howard started a paper of his own, the "Dispatch," which he got out himself, with the help of a job printer named Lee. The paper was edited on reform lines. The two men lived through the winter on a few cents a day, getting out the paper in spite of overwhelming difficulties. One day some one suggested to Howard that he run for Mayor of Salem.

TO an unprejudiced observer, the chance of realizing my ambition to become the Mayor of Salem would certainly not have seemed great, when I returned from Boston cherishing it in January, 1909. The main question was whether I could continue to make a living there.

I had begun to see what kind of a newspaper I must publish. It must treat the big local issues, which my competitor, the *News*, avoided. I heard many expressions of approval as I adopted this policy. For instance, I had occasion to go into one of the big shoe factories one day, and, as I walked through the room where the men were working, I saw a copy of the *Dispatch* lying on one of the benches, almost worn to shreds. One of the workmen told me that they passed it around at lunch-time, and over forty men saw it each day.

At the same time my circulation stood still around one hundred, and I got practically no advertising. So we had to hustle even to get paper to print upon.

One Thursday night, I remember, we were entirely out of paper. Our money was gone. I tried to buy from the local printers. I went into executive session with myself, and finally produced an idea. So I started out for the nearest grocery store, and asked the proprietor if he would give me a few sheets of wrapping-paper. He told me to help myself, and I took two or three sheets. I repeated this operation at some twenty grocery stores, and finally succeeded in getting enough to print about a hundred copies for our next morning's edition. The sheets were different shades of brown, and different thicknesses; so, after this edition was printed, we went over the thinner sheets and filled out with pen and ink the places where the type had failed to print.

As to ink, we were more fortunate. An ink salesman came into our office early, and let us have a barrel of ink on our own terms, on account of an old grievance against his treatment by Damon, the publisher of the *News*.

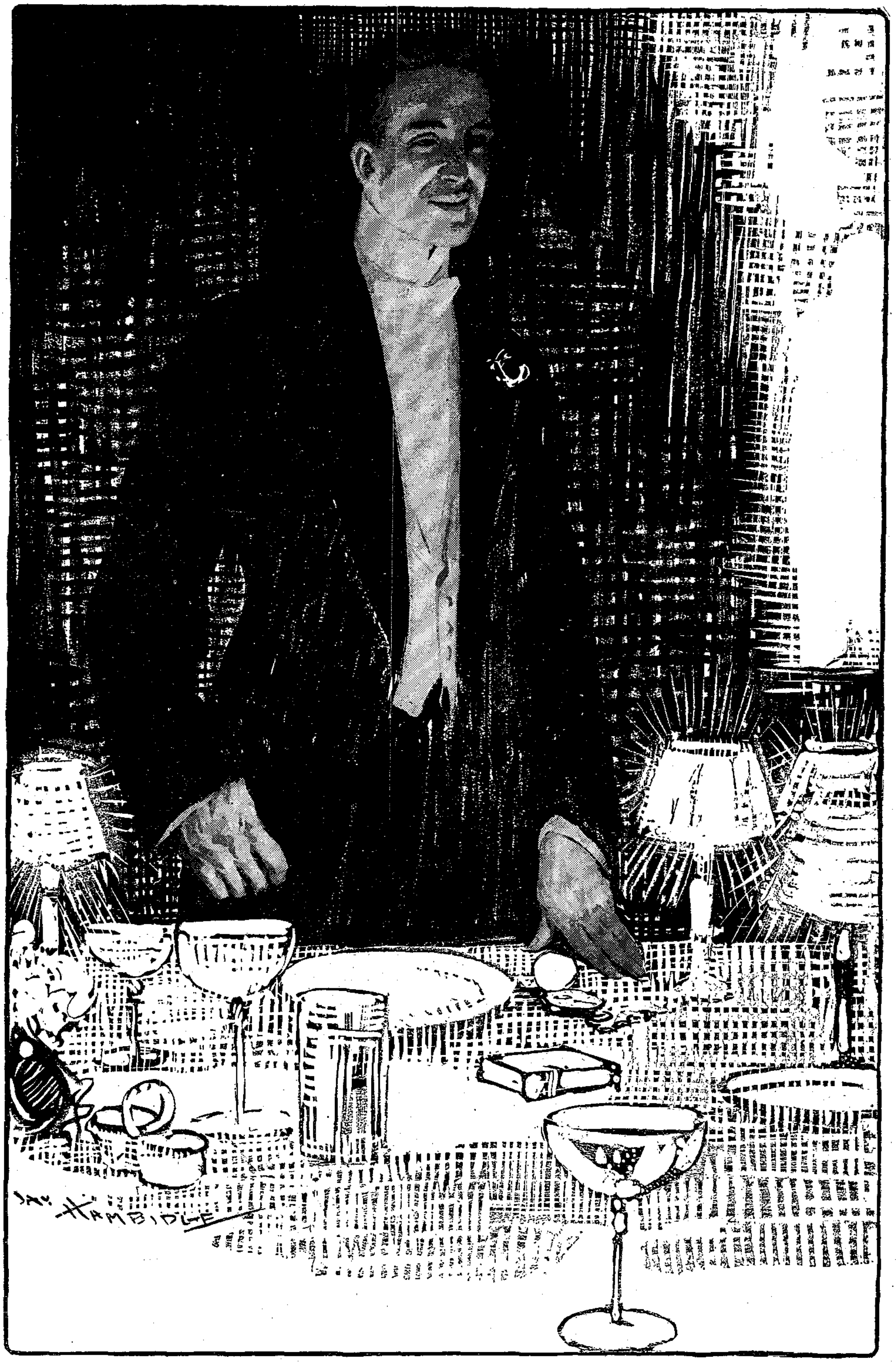
"I don't care if you never pay for it," he said.

There was no expense for labor. Lee did the typesetting, and we turned out the papers on a foot-press by the two-man power of the firm. Lee slept in the printing plant. But it required great mental effort to provide our daily food.

For some weeks I stayed at the boarding-house. But matters were going almost as badly with "Ma" and "Pa" as with us. Finally "Ma" announced that hereafter she would serve no more meals on Sundays. This was a sudden and disastrous blow for me. I was getting credit at the boarding-house; but where could I provide actual cash to feed myself over Sunday?

Hypnotizing a Sunday Dinner

The first two Sundays I got through all right, but I woke up on the third without a cent. All I could do was to hunt diligently for some one who would take me out to dinner. I wandered around in vain until one o'clock, when I ran across Harry Curtis, one of my acquaintances in Day's tailor shop. I asked him if he had dined, and he said he was just through dinner



DRESSED IN A SUIT OF CLOTHES TEMPORARILY REDEEMED FROM THE PAWNBROKER, HOWARD STANDS UP BEFORE A HOSTILE COMPANY TO MAKE HIS FIRST SPEECH IN SALEM. "ISN'T IT RATHER DANGEROUS, MR. TOAST-MASTER," HE ASKS, "TO PLACE YOUR WATCH IN FRONT OF ME, KNOWING MY FINANCIAL CONDITION?"

and was on his way to the club. So I went down to the club with him, and we sat together in the window, watching the people passing. I was desperately hungry.

We had been there a little while, when we began to talk about Augustus Thomas' play, "The Witching Hour." Harry said he believed in the theory of the play — that it was possible to concentrate your thoughts on some one and make him do as you wished. I immediately started trying it out.

For over an hour I talked about nothing but food. I described in detail different banquets I had attended, and their menus. Finally Harry moved uneasily, got up, and said: "Gee, I'm hungry; let's go and have something to eat."

"I've only got enough money to buy supper," said I, "and I don't care to pay for an extra meal."

"Oh, that's all right," said Harry. "It's my treat."

So I was fed again.

But it was hard work, especially as I had to do all the planning. After a while I had to give up taking my meals at the boarding-house, and only roomed there. And Lee and I stayed in the shop, and warmed what food we could get over the little stove in the office. We lived on as low as one dollar a week apiece.

Even then we almost came to a stop. Every night I would come in with the receipts of the day, and we would sit together by the stove and rest.

"We've got to do something," I'd say.

"That's right," old Lee would answer, wagging his head up and down.

"Right off, too," I'd say.

"Yep, that's right," he'd agree, and wag his head again feebly — and sit staring at the floor.

Interview with a Prominent Citizen

The night after we printed our wrapping-paper edition, we found ourselves on the dead center again, with just a few cents between us. So I turned and suggested to Lee that he let me interview him on his impressions of Salem. He did. He gave me one of the strongest interviews I ever heard concerning Salem in about one hundred words. I wrote it out and headed it "An Interview with a Prominent Citizen." We had just three sheets of paper left.

We printed these. Lee had a few coppers; so, when we were done, I turned to him and offered to sell him the whole edition for three cents. Lee didn't fully understand the transaction, but, as usual, he trusted to my judgment and handed over the three cents, took the three newspapers, and put them into his box, as I suggested.

Our paper was like nothing on earth in those days; and especially peculiar editions still command high prices locally, after the fashion of rare postage-stamps.

That morning, at nine o'clock, we were sitting mournfully in the office, still wondering how we would get breakfast, when the door opened and a fresh politician, who bought our paper every day, came in.

"Is your little paper out this morning?" said he.

"Yes," said I.

He took a penny out of his pocket and tossed it to me, saying:

"Well, give us a copy of it."

"The entire edition is sold out," I said.

"That's funny," said he. "Anything special in it this morning?"

"There was an interview that was sent us last night," I replied. "The man regretted it afterward, and bought up the entire edition."

Our fresh friend stood around for a few minutes. Finally he put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a lot of silver, saying: "I tell you what I'll do with you: I'll give you half a dollar for a copy."

"Sorry," I said, "but we are all sold out."

"Haven't you got a single copy?" he asked.

"Not one," I said.

"How on earth can I get one?"

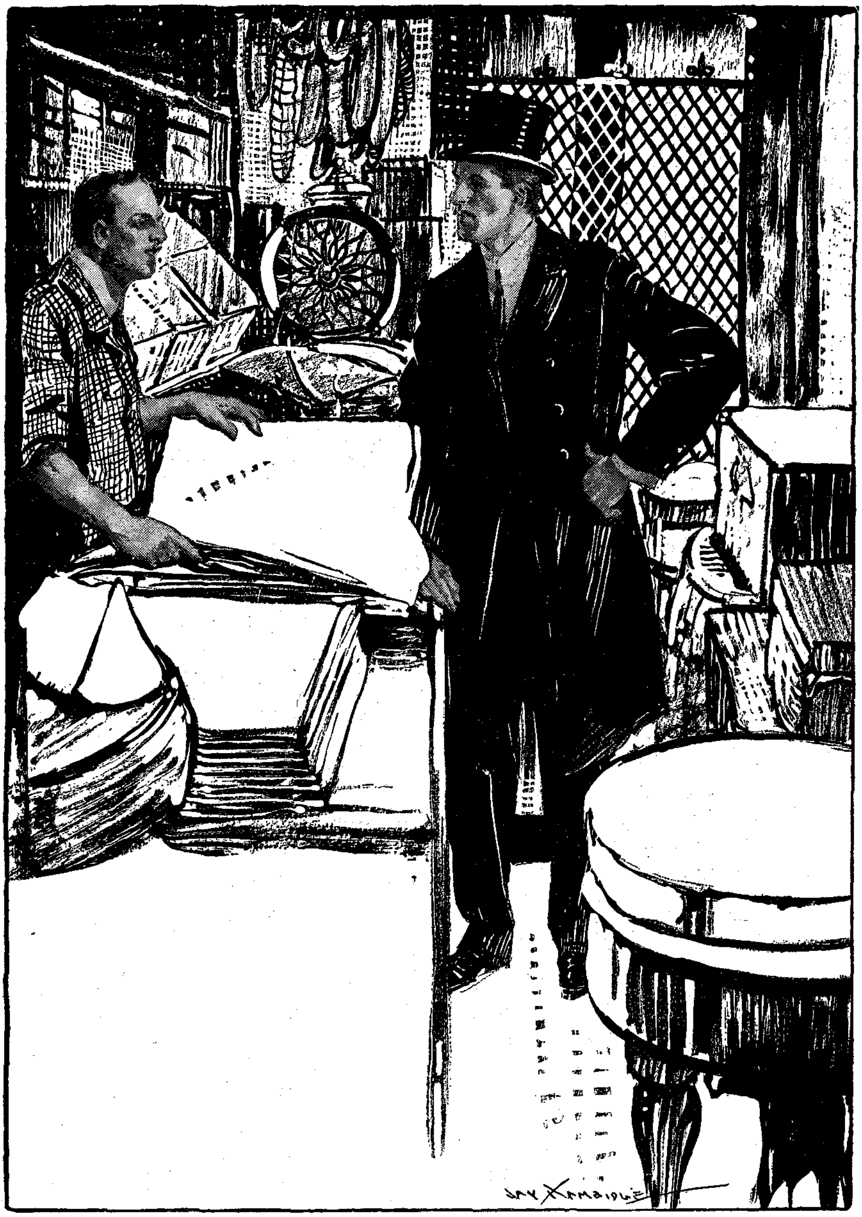
"I can't help you out," I said to him, "but if you want to be sure in future, the way to do is to become a yearly subscriber; then we are forced to deliver the paper, no matter what's in it."

At that he drew out some bills and laid down three dollars, saying: "Put me down for a year."

Before that night we had four or five new yearly subscribers at three dollars apiece from other men, whom our friend had spoken to during the day. So the *Dispatch* went on again.

My Maiden Speech in Salem

But there is a turning-point to everything, and by and by ours came. More than anything else, it was due to my friends — Bill Sanborn, who gave me my first cordial greeting to Salem, and "Ed" Allen, whom he spoke to me about that first day of my newspaper. The crowd which gathered about Day's shop were growing enthusiastic about the *Dispatch*, as it waded into local affairs. "Link" Allen, the alderman, whose letter had brought the paper into politics, was a good-hearted fellow. He made a specialty of supplying me with cigars, the one indulgence I retained. Both Sanborn and "Ed" Allen were always doing me some kindness in an unobtrusive way.

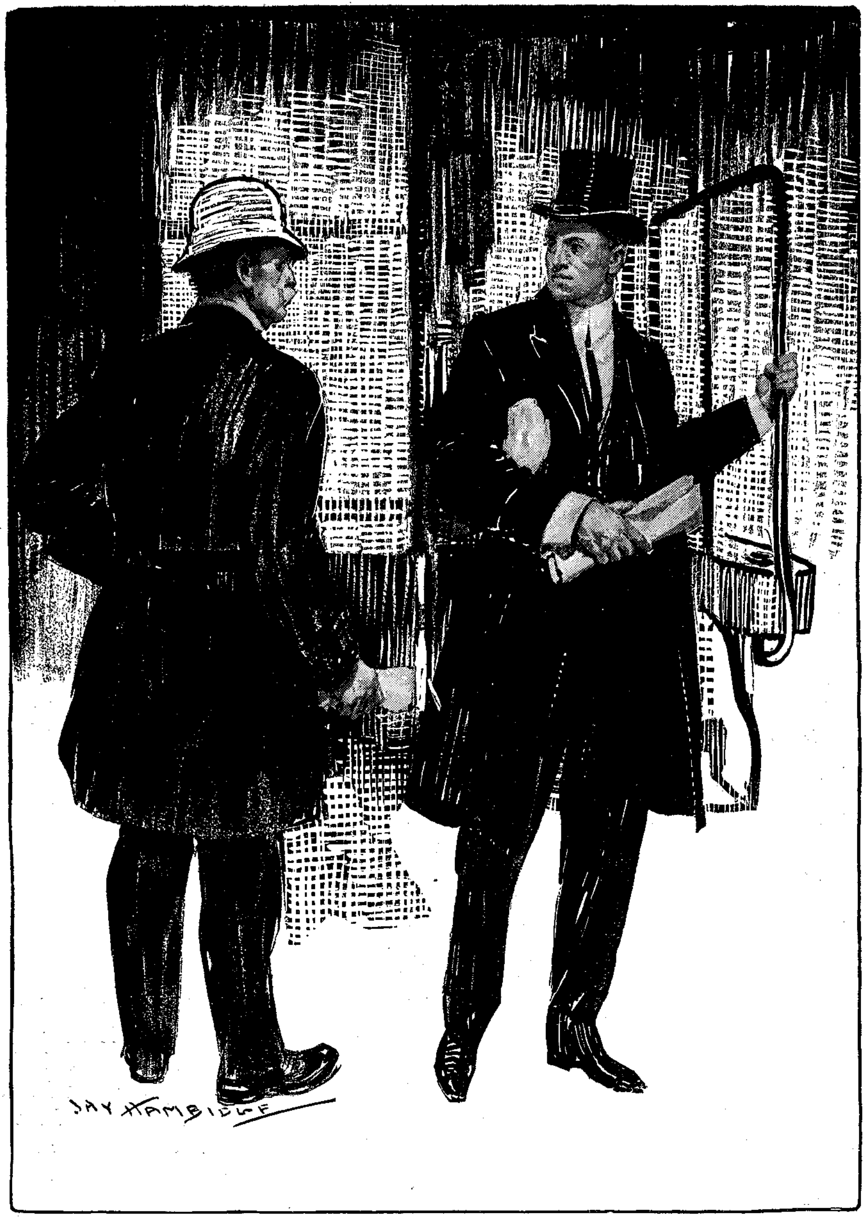


OUT OF MONEY, BANKRUPT IN CREDIT, HOWARD IS AT HIS WITS' END TO GET PAPER FOR HIS NEXT EDITION. AS A LAST RESOURCE, HE VISITS TWENTY GROCERY STORES, BEGGING FOR WRAPPING-PAPER

One day, while we were all in Day's office, Sanborn suggested a method of getting myself and my newspaper before the public. He proposed to get me an invitation to speak at the annual meeting of the Now and Then Association, an organization of eight hundred of the young business men of the city, and finally he manoeuvered until he secured the opportunity for me.

It was something of an anxiety to me — the question of getting to that banquet. Both of my dress-suits were in a pawn-shop in Boston, and I hadn't a cent to get them out with. Finally I went to the pawnbroker in Boston, and talked him into letting me have a suit for that night. It took an hour's talking, but I came out of the store with the suit on, leaving behind the suit I had been wearing, and a written agreement to bring the dress-clothes back the next day. I spent a good while dressing, especially in preparing my only pair of shoes, which were greatly cracked across the top. But I finally blacked them up so I could wear them.

The toast-master was a man from the *News* office. The first speaker was the Mayor of Salem, John F. Hurley; after him a politician from Boston spoke on state affairs, a clergyman talked on "Good Behavior," and an ex-president of the association followed him. A more melancholy collection of human speech was never put together. It was after ten o'clock, and the man from the *News* office, who was toast-master, arose and said with crushing emphasis:



AS HOWARD ALIGHTS FROM HIS TRAIN A POLICEMAN STEPS IN FRONT OF HIM. "I'VE GOT A WARRANT FOR YOUR ARREST ON A CHARGE OF CRIMINAL LIBEL," HE ANNOUNCES. "YOU'LL HAVE TO COME WITH ME"

"We have only a few minutes left; and I now introduce Arthur Howard, the editor of the *Dispatch*."

Whereupon he took his watch from his pocket and laid it down in front of me. So I arose before my first audience in Salem. It was a chilly one. I had been warned by Bill not to be too serious.

"Isn't it rather dangerous, Mr. Toast-master," I said, "to place your watch in front of me, knowing my financial condition?"

They sat up and laughed a little at that.

"Mr. Toast-master and gentlemen," I said, "you will notice that I do not call you friends, and I will tell you the reason why.

"A number of years ago a Salem boy went to New York and enlisted in a local regiment. The first week that he was in it, the regiment went into camp, and the Salem boy was put on guard outside the Colonel's tent. Late that night the Colonel came home. The sentry had never seen him before.

"As the Colonel approached his tent, the Salem boy stepped forward and said, 'Who goes there?'

"'A friend,' said the Colonel.

"'You're a liar,' said the Salem boy. 'I never saw you before in my life.' And so, gentlemen," I continued, "if I said friends, I am fearful you would all jump up and say: 'You're a liar, Howard. We never saw you before in our lives.'"

My audience laughed at this, and I quickly followed it with a few humorous anecdotes about members of the club, and closed with a reference to my independent position as a newspaper man. My speech took just ten minutes to deliver, and I ended it as follows:

"You probably wonder what I am doing in Salem, and I think I ought to explain to you that I publish a newspaper here called the *Dispatch*, the circulation of which reaches 2,999. Some of you gentlemen look doubtful, so let me explain here where the copies go.

"We have an annual subscriber, the Essex Institute, which is compelled by its charter to subscribe; I give one copy to my landlady in part payment for my food; seven copies are actually sold on the streets for cash; and 2,990 copies are given away to educate the public. That makes a total of 2,999."

I Incorporate the "Dispatch"

The diners laughed a good deal over my speech. A "jolly" was evidently the kind of thing they wanted, and when I went out of the hall, Bill met me outside in the corridor and shook my hand, saying: "Your speech was all right, Howard; you certainly made good with the fellows."

All at once he looked down and saw my shoes.

"Say," he said in his usual blunt way, "you didn't change your shoes to-night; you've got your working shoes on."

I was caught unawares.

"Why, Bill," I said, "those are the only shoes I own."

He looked at me a minute. Then he put his hand in his pocket and brought out a lot of bills.

"Here," he said, "I want to subscribe to your paper for a year. Make it two years!" he added impulsively, handing me a five- and a one-dollar bill.

"I want to see you to-morrow morning in Allen's office," he said finally.

The next day at ten o'clock I was in Ed Allen's office.

"Tell him what we were talking about, Ed," said Sanborn, after a pause.

Then they told me that they wanted to help me as much as they could afford to — that there were a lot of people in Salem who admired the newspaper for its work. Sanborn suggested that I form a company, and perhaps I could sell a little stock in it. They would pay for the incorporation, and each of them would buy twenty-five dollars' worth of stock themselves. Then they each laid down twenty-five dollars. I went up to Boston and got my legal friend, Mr. Peabody, to incorporate the Salem *Dispatch* Company. Soon after that we began bringing out a larger paper. We still published only four pages, but we increased the sheet's size until it was a little less like a hand-bill.

What made the paper possible was its independent comments on local affairs. The *News*, which had had a monopoly of the daily field in the past, had been very free with its comments in early days, when it was struggling for existence. Its editor had even left for Europe following a libel suit, in those days of its beginning. But now it was so situated that free comment on the various gangs in control of the city were not in its programs. Some of the leading politicians were its own stockholders. This situation gave me my opportunity, and I opened up on political affairs with enthusiastic freedom.

Salem's Political Leaders

The political situation in Salem at that time was a wonderful thing. There were no party lines in local elections; the votes were largely divided into the personal followings of different individuals.

The best-known figure was the bluff old swearing "Colonel" Joe Peterson — the ex-

Mayor, the man who handled the money of the State Republican machine in Essex County, and the contractor to whom the political jobs in the county were thrown.

Then there were the McSweeny brothers, who built their fortunes on the liquor question. Their law firm represented the liquor dealers, while they personally were prominent in the total abstinence societies. One brother was a license commissioner, one an alderman, and the third a general assistant for the other two, being the only one of the three not a lawyer.

A third leader was John F. Hurley, a political insurgent and the greatest "glad-hand" politician in the world, who had graduated into the mayoralty from a long and profitable career in selling liquor without a license.

And last, but most active of all, was Doyle, the theater ticket agent, the director of the Board of Aldermen. From this position he gained the voting strength which comes to the man who controls the employment of city laborers.

As he was most active in directing the affairs of the city at the time, it was he whom I hit first.

The most ridiculous and extravagant perversion of the city government's work in recent years had been in the building of a new high school. Instead of being located somewhere near the center of the city, it was placed in an open pasture at the extreme southwest end of the town, a mile and two miles from the houses of a large number of the pupils. In a city of no greater area than Salem, the location was preposterous.

My comments on local affairs began with the treatment of this school situation, followed by a criticism of the Electric Light Company's rates and the part of Doyle as leader of the aldermen in these matters. Afterward I took up and featured the purchase of a melancholy plot of ground nicknamed Bunco Park, which had been bought by the city at an extravagant price and turned into a little public breathing-space.

One after another, as issues came up, I devoted my editorials to them. The idea took; and my circulation increased in a month to three or four hundred copies. And, in the meanwhile, I disclosed my ambition of running for Mayor to Sanborn and Ed Allen. Surprising as it may seem, they took it. Considering the class of men who had recently held the office, it was not so preposterous, after all. I had had experience, the education of large affairs and of wide travel in Europe and America. And I had a newspaper through which I could appeal directly to the people. Both Sanborn and Allen started with characteristic energy to back my campaign.

It was spring, and the election was not until the following December; but, contrary to all precedent, I began to feel out public sentiment.

On April 10 I came out with an editorial:

OUR NEXT MAYOR — A PREDICTION

in which I said that the citizens of Salem wanted a change.

> The next Mayor [I said] must be a fearless man who can take the helm without fear or favor and without giving a promise to any one; and in order to be elected he must have a newspaper behind him. There are only three men who can do that here:
>
> Mr. Robin Damon, of the *News*.
>
> Hon. J. D. A. Gauss, of the *Observer* [a weekly paper].
>
> And one other.
>
> Mr. Damon has not proved his fitness for the position. He is not a man who can go out and campaign for Mayor until election, speaking night and day, for he is neither an orator nor a good writer. His popularity is in doubt. He had the opportunity to expose the graft in Salem, but he let it slide.
>
> It looks as if a candidate were available, and we believe that one we have in mind will be elected (just to see what he would do); and we hope his manhood will assert itself to such an extent that people will ever after say: "The year that newspaper fellow was in, no one dared graft; our streets were clean, and the liquor laws obeyed."

The next day I announced myself a candidate for Mayor. My paper's circulation was now fifteen hundred.

The politicians took this at first rather as a huge joke — very naturally. I could not even register as a citizen of Massachusetts for three months to come. But I kept hammering them day after day, in one matter or another, until they lost their amusement in a confused anger.

Ned Bates' Affidavit

Day after day I had been working, not to trap individuals, but to unearth the methods of the system as a whole. There was one big job in particular which I wanted to learn about, but always it eluded me. There was a go-between in it, but I could never put my hand on him. Finally I was told that the man I wanted was a fellow named Ned Bates.*

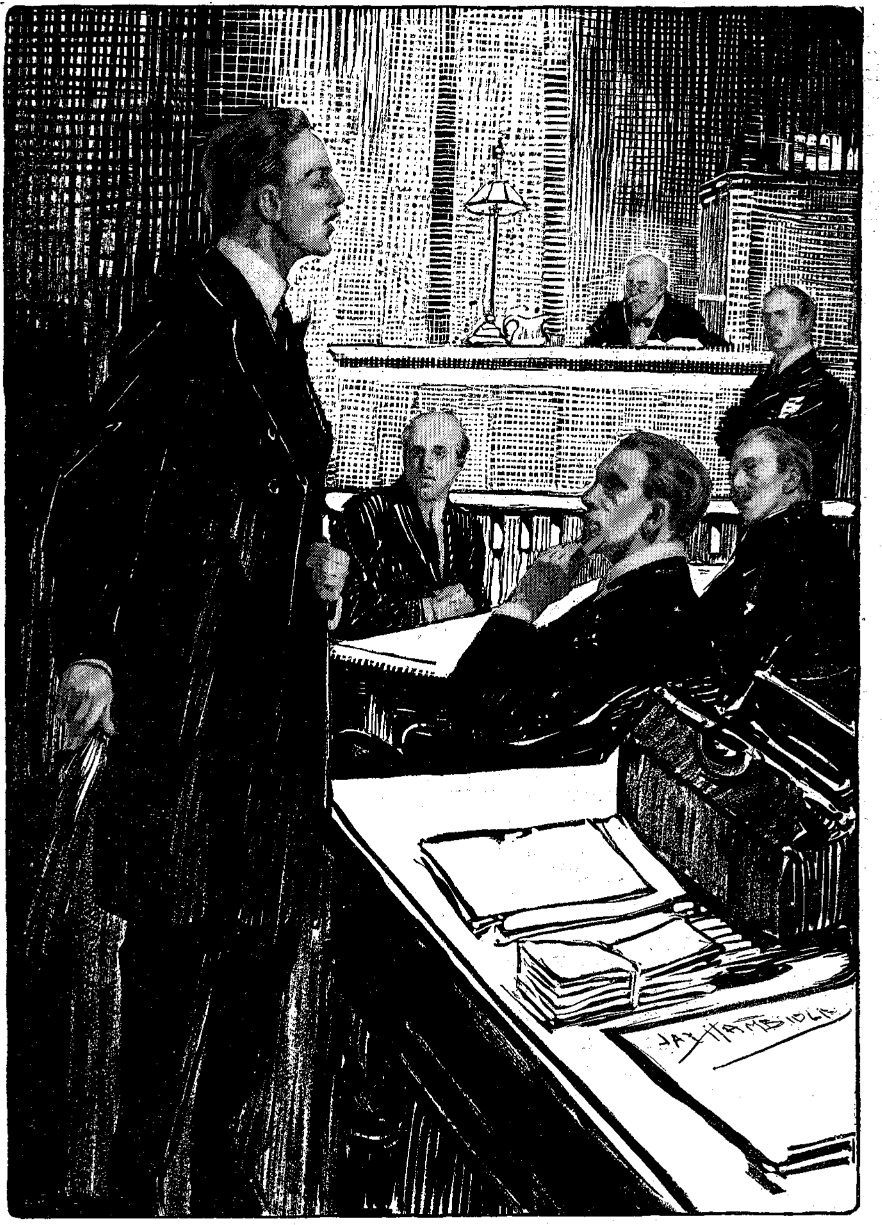
One night I went into a restaurant, and over in one corner I saw Bates. I went over to his table and sat down opposite to him. He was drunk and very talkative. After he had finished his meal, he walked over to my office with me and sat down. Suddenly he began to tell me about the deal, and as he told me I wrote down what he said. When he got through I read him what I had written.

---

* This name is fictitious.

"That's the story," he said, "complete; and I hope you send them back to jail."

"Would you sign it?"



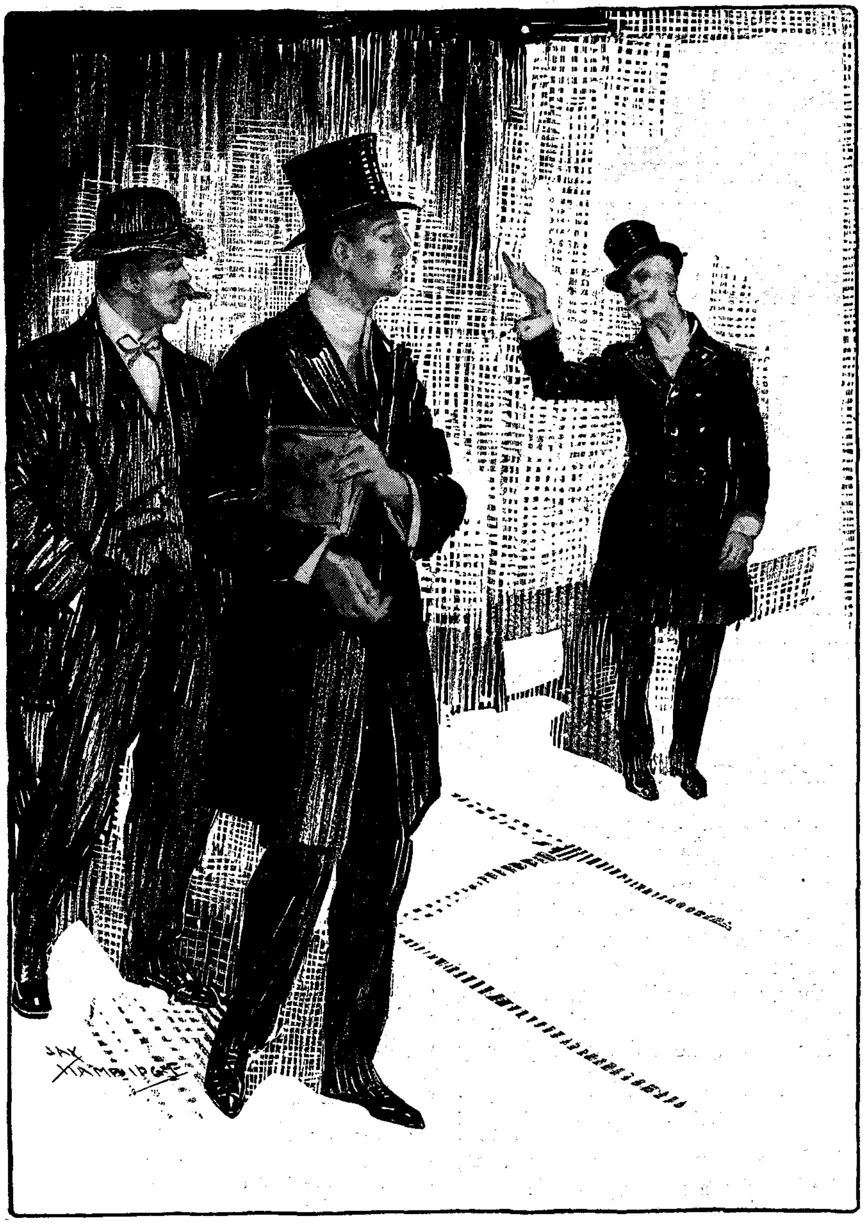
HOWARD'S ENEMIES, ANXIOUS TO GET HIM OUT OF SALEM, GAVE HIM REPEATED OPPORTUNITIES TO ESCAPE TRIAL; BUT HOWARD CREATES A SENSATION IN COURT BY INSISTING ON GOING TO JAIL

"Sure I would," he said, and picked up a pen and wrote his name at the bottom.

When he left I wrote a savage editorial on the deal.

My campaign was warming up political circles in Salem. The sad congregation of politicians on Town House Square was stirred every day to its core; and I could hear the terrible Colonel begin to rumble two blocks away, whenever I went down the main street. Anonymous letters appeared predicting my early destruction; and my partner, Lee, gave out unexpected warnings as we sat about the office stove.

Somewhere about the first of May I went home to my boarding-house one early morning after the paper had gone to press. I sat at my window, with the curtain up, and began to write my first public speech in my campaign for Mayor. It was about two o'clock in the morning. Suddenly there was a crash beside me, and I felt the house shake. Looking out in the moonlight, I saw on the ground a stone about twice the size of my hand, and, reaching out of the window, I located the dent where it had struck the side of the house. It had missed the glass by about three inches. There was nobody to be seen, and I went back and lay down on the bed, wondering what I ought to do.



ON HIS WAY TO JAIL, HE MEETS THE MAYOR OF SALEM, WHOM HE SUSPECTS OF BEING BEHIND THE PROSECUTION. THE MAYOR SMILES AND WAVES HIM AN AFFABLE FAREWELL

About twenty minutes later some one whistled outside my window. I raised it again, and there stood Lee.

"Is that you, Howard?" he said. "Say, can I see you a minute?"

I went down and let him in, and he told me that two or three men had been down at the *Dispatch* office, pounding on the door and threatening to "lick" the editor. Then they had thrown stones at the building, one of which had broken a window.

Finally he asked me if I had fifty cents, and after I had given it to him he hung around for half an hour, saying nothing in particular. Just before he left he got up and shook hands with me, wishing me all kinds of luck.

I didn't understand it at the time; but the next morning, when I stopped at the post-office, I got the following letter:

Dear Howard:

Perhaps you can stand it, but I can't. Good luck to you. LEE.

That was the end of my first partner.

Three weeks later I received a brief letter from him saying that he had enlisted in the United States army. I couldn't blame Lee for his conduct, but I received his second letter with regret. It has profoundly shaken my confidence in the standing army of the United States.

A Business Deal with Johnny

My printer had gone, and I regretted him. We had been through hard times together. But I had in the meantime found another close business associate. I had made connections with Johnny, the official *Dispatch* newsboy.

Early in the year, while I was still acting as my own newsboy, we were visited one day by a very small boy, enveloped in a very long, dingy overcoat. His name, he said, was Johnny Alwyn.

He said that he had seen the *Dispatch* and would like to take a chance selling it. I told him we sold it to newsboys two for a cent; whereupon he laid down a penny and invested in two on the spot.

He had been gone about ten minutes, when he returned and laid down one of the two copies.

"I don't think I care to sell them any more," he remarked.

"Very well," I said; "we will give you your penny back, and we are very glad to have met you."

"I'm satisfied," he said, "but I'm through with your paper. It isn't any good and I don't think I can sell it."

He had an intelligent face and an odd gift of language. I took a fancy to him; so the next day, when I ran across him in the street, I asked him to come down to the office.

"What for?" he asked.

"I want to put through a business deal with you," I said.

"I guess I'll put through a business deal, maybe," said Johnny, somewhat suspiciously, "but I don't want to handle your paper; it's no good."

However, I finally induced Johnny to allow me to make daily consignments of papers to him, so that he could handle them without financial risk, and in a short time he was the most ardent associate in our enterprise. He was about the size of a grasshopper, and the way he would march up to the Town House Square politicians and try to sell the papers attacking them was a thing grotesque to see.

"Here you are, Colonel," he would say, shaking the *Dispatch* in front of the warlike leader of the street-pavers. "Here you are — *Dispatch*. All about you!"

The Colonel would let out a roar that almost lifted him off his feet:

"Go home, you brat! You ought to be licked within an inch of your life."

In a short time Johnny had reached the opinion that the *Dispatch* was the greatest of human institutions, and recognized that he was an essential part of it. He insisted upon seeing and talking with the editor personally. It became his opinion that if I would publish something besides politics he could sell a great number of copies, and when I asked him to name a topic of general interest, he suggested that I write about the newsboys. That night there was a circus in town, and Johnny attended it as my guest. The next issue I devoted to a description of our business alliance with Johnny, and our experience at the circus, under the caption:

THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN

The show [I explained] was just what would please an editor and a newsboy. There were bareback riders and a contortionist, clowns, wire-walkers, trapeze actors, ponies, and everything that makes the eyes dilate and the pulse beat. The contortionist was great, and two of the clowns were very funny. One tried to carry the other out of the ring, and his efforts made Johnny laugh until he swallowed a peanut whole. Johnny found two friends after the show, and we all had "hot dogs" together. We like Johnny, and his observations and appreciation of the circus are worth recording. Johnny is not only a good business man, but an agreeable companion; and, judging by the way he digested the peanuts, candy, and "hot dogs," we should say his stomach was made of iron.

As soon as Johnny read it, he insisted on taking all the papers, and set off at once for his station in Town House Square, yelling in his shrill voice: "Salem *Dispatch*. All about me!" He sold the entire edition, and not only established his reputation, but ours at the same time.

A Benevolent Creditor

Our circulation was increasing daily through those spring months of 1909. But we were still having our troubles. Some time after, we formed the Salem *Dispatch* Company, enlarged the size of our page, and gave the work of printing to a local job printer. He hoped to get advertising in this way, but we didn't get any to speak of. We were making no money; in fact, we were running behind. And finally the Salem printer told me he could not go on any longer, and I had to make arrangements with a man in Lynn, six miles away, to print the *Dispatch*. He took over my type and started printing. He had been at this only a short time when I got a telegram stating that his plant had been destroyed by fire. All the type I owned went with it, and neither one of us had a dollar's worth of insurance. Again it looked as if the *Dispatch* had reached its end. When I came back from Lynn that night, I didn't see how I could possibly go on.

As I sat in my office, wondering what I would do, I saw a letter on my desk from a local dealer to whom I owed twenty-five dollars. I had no desire to open it at that time, but finally I tore it open and found the following inclosed:

> *Dear Mr. Howard:* I have just heard that you have been burned out, and appreciate fully the difficult position you must be in. You owe me twenty-five dollars, and I inclose a check for twenty-five dollars more. Please send me fifty dollars' worth of stock in your company.

The twenty-five dollars that he gave me went into type the next morning, and I started to set up the paper myself. My typesetting was a strange and wonderful piece of work; but I finally got it done, and arranged with a Salem job printer to run it off for me. When he had run off about a hundred copies he was called to the telephone. As if by intuition, I went over to the nearest font of type and changed the date of the paper one day forward. I felt that somebody was going to tell him not to print for us. When he came back he said: "Something has happened to my press; I can't print any more papers for you."

"Well, run fifty more for me," I answered, "and I will be satisfied."

So he ran off fifty more, and I got out my paper for two days more. I learned afterward that Damon of the *News* was on the other end of the wire.

The next morning Curtis, a young man who had written me, some weeks before, an appreciation of my starting an independent paper in Salem, brought in one hundred dollars, put it into the enterprise, and became a member of the *Dispatch* staff.

Curtis put in one hundred dollars. Sanborn and Ed Allen each put in fifty dollars more, and several other people contributed small amounts. By a part payment I got a good little press in Boston, valued at $600, and secured a young man who had been in the Lynn plant which burned out, to be typesetter and pressman. And so the *Dispatch* started on its way again.

I had not ceased from the first to pay my respects to my competitor, the "Little Octopus," who published the opposition sheet. And he, as well as the politicians, did not bear my enterprise any good will. Early in the spring I had expected to secure the printing of the advertisements of the liquor license applications for the city, because the *News*, in a spectacular excess of virtue, had made it a policy never to take even so much of a liquor advertisement as this. When I was just about to print the names, the *News* suddenly repented, reversed its established policy, and took the advertising. I commented on its action as hypocritical, and one after another, as I took up the instances of political mismanagement, I called attention to the fact that the *News* had not seen fit to tell the public of them.

Finally, on Memorial Day, I made a flank movement by taking away from the control of the *News* the old newspaper I had originally tried to buy from them — the *Gazette* — and publishing it as an evening paper.

The thing was done very simply.

In the seven months I had been in Salem the old *Gazette* had not been published. The publisher of the *News* had let it die. I wrote to the authorities in Washington, stating the facts, and asking if there was anything to prevent my publishing a *Gazette*. They replied that there was not, and I came out with both a morning and an evening paper.

I celebrated this event with a flippant editorial which did not tend to allay the irritation caused by my move. I had two newspapers now in which to pay my respects to the political gangs and the *News*. And in the meantime I was pounding them on all occasions in the speech-making campaign I was beginning to make as a candidate for Mayor. Two thirds of the daily newspapers in Salem, I announced, favored Howard for Mayor.

I soon began to find that my opponents were far from inactive. They had sent detectives to look up my whole career in New York. The *News* never mentioned my name, as a matter of policy; but Salem was flooded with scandals about me. I found that a great number of personal letters had been stolen from my room in the boarding-house. Soon after I began to find that my letters had been opened when they reached me from the post-office. There was every sign that I was being watched on every side.

I hit back as hard blows as I knew how. I had worked out now a regular formula for the *Dispatch*. The features were a local story on the front page, with a mastodontic headline, often a single word which covered half the page; an editorial directed against local affairs; and a rhymed parody. As my campaign for Mayor advanced, my attacks on the badly managed city government and the political machine became more and more direct and pointed.

"A Warrant for Your Arrest"

On Saturday morning, July 10, 1909, I was returning to Salem from Boston, where I had been to buy some type. As I alighted from the train, a little before ten o'clock, a policeman stepped up to me and said:

"I've got a warrant for your arrest."

"What for?" I asked.

"Criminal libel," he answered.

"Have you the warrant with you?" I asked him.

"No," he answered; "but if you will come over to the court I will show it to you. If you will give me your word that you will meet me there," he continued, "I will spare you the odium of arrest."

So I promised, went to the office and got the paper out, and then went, with my associate, Curtis, to the courthouse. I was called to the bar, and arraigned on the charge of criminal libel, preferred by Alderman Doyle. I asked to see the complaint, and the clerk responded that it had been locked up over Sunday. The whole thing seemed strange to me, and I rose and said to the judge: "Your Honor, how can I plead if I don't know what is in the complaint?"

The judge ordered it to be brought out. It was about an article I had published on Doyle the week before. Instead of being made by Doyle himself, the complaint was made by James B. Skinner, the assistant marshal of the city. The two best-known lawyers in Salem, Joseph F. Quinn and Michael L. Sullivan, appeared for Doyle. Sullivan was the attorney for the big liquor and corporation interests and the legal adviser of Editor Damon of the *News*. My case was set for Friday morning, six days later; and when this was done the attorneys for the prosecution insisted that my bail be placed at twenty-five hundred dollars.

I was without counsel myself; but I stepped forward and said that that bail was unreasonable and entirely out of my reach. It happened that on that very morning an Italian, who was defended by one of the attorneys for the prosecution, had been held for an assault with intent to kill under only one thousand dollars bonds. I called the judge's attention to the fact that it was ridiculous to hold me on twenty-five hundred dollars bonds when this man had been released on one thousand dollars. At that rate, I pointed out, I could afford to try to kill two men and a boy for the same bail rate as for one political editorial. The judge then reduced my bail to one thousand dollars and gave me until Monday morning to procure it.

As soon as I left court I rushed to Boston to see Mr. Peabody, but found him out of the city on a long vacation. Curtis, my new associate, who was with me, suggested that I call upon a minister, formerly of Salem, who had made serious charges against the political gangs in Salem. When I saw him, he advised me to secure the best counsel in Boston. I went from him to see Louis D. Brandeis.

When I met Mr. Brandeis, I frankly told him my history, both in New York and Salem, my disastrous experience in money matters in the past, and my present lack of funds. After hearing my story he said he would take my case, notwithstanding my financial condition. I need not worry about that, he said.

His advice to me was practically: "Go to jail." If I had the sand to do this, he said, the result, in all probability, would be worse for my persecutors than for myself.

On the Way to Jail

I went back to Salem, and brought out in the *Dispatch* on Monday morning an editorial that ran like this:

ON THE WAY

Good-by, boys.

Heard the news?

Our editor has been arrested.

Complaint was made by M. J. Doyle, alderman of the city of Salem. The complaint is libel.

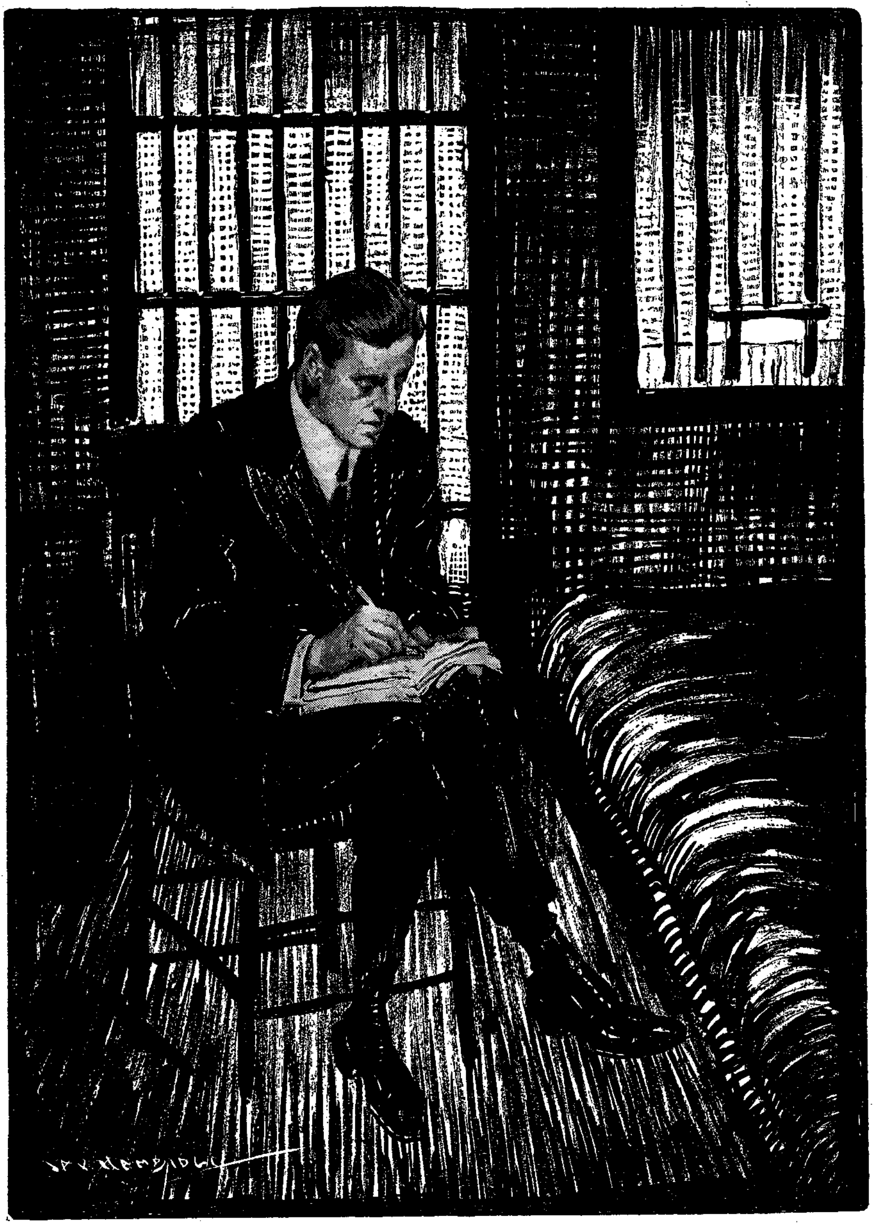
Messrs. Quinn and Sullivan are the attorneys for Mr. Doyle. They are our two best and most expensive lawyers. Now, Mr. Doyle told Alderman Cahill several times that he would not spend one cent to get after Howard. Some one else must have put up the money. Who? "Colonel" Peterson, Damon, or Mayor Hurley? We doubt very much if Mr. Doyle could put up a cent.

The complaint says that Howard deprived Doyle of his good name, fame, and reputation. Try as hard as he could, Mr. Howard could not help smiling as he stood there in court listening to this complaint.

What a beautiful world this is! How beautiful the flowers are! How brilliantly the sun shines! And how nice to walk abroad and breathe the fresh air! And to think that on Monday we must bid good-by to all, and go down to jail!

We pounded out from eight to nine thousand copies of the *Dispatch*, and they were on the street at five A. M., selling like hot cakes. I had three boys stationed outside of Editor Damon's house and yelling at the top of their voices:

"All about Doyle!"



IN CELL No. 45, WAITING FOR TRIAL, HOWARD SITS DOWN TO WRITE THE EDITORIAL WHICH IS TO FALL LIKE A BOMBSHELL NEXT MORNING AMONG THE CITIZENS OF SALEM

At nine o'clock I appeared in the police-court alone. I had decided not to have any lawyer in these preliminary proceedings.

"Are you prepared, Mr. Howard," said the judge, "to give a bond of one thousand dollars?"

"No, your honor," I said; "and I don't know where I could get it."

Lawyer Sullivan sprang to his feet and said: "This man has a wealthy father in New York who could readily supply the bond."

"Mr. Sullivan is more familiar with my family," I said, "than I am with his."

"I will let you go on your own recognizance again until to-morrow morning," said the judge; "and I would advise you to communicate with your father."

My Father Sails for Europe

I had no intention of bringing my father into the matter. He was sailing for Europe, I happened to know, the next morning at ten o'clock. He was an old man, feeble, and in need of rest, and I did not intend to worry him with this affair of mine. He would have come to my aid, I knew. He had been following my efforts to reëstablish myself for several months, and I knew he had been pleased. But I proposed to go alone. Besides, I had no fear for the final outcome of my case — I knew where I stood; and I served notice of that fact in an editorial in the next morning's *Dispatch* which I called

> AS OUR CONSCIENCE DIRECTS
>
> We want to say [I wrote] for the benefit of all grafters and politicians, and the public in general, that nothing has ever been said in the *Dispatch* that did not have our most careful consideration. The editorials and articles have each and every one been based upon what we believe, and after careful investigation have felt positively certain, to be solid facts. And we would like to impress upon all the fact that we have no personal spite against any individual. It is the system which is in vogue in this city that we are against.

On Tuesday morning I went before the court again, and asked the judge to hold me for appearance before the court on Friday under my own recognizance. I did not own one thousand dollars' worth of property, I told him, and I did not believe, while carrying out a public work in my newspaper, that I ought to put myself under an obligation to any one. I was only accused of a misdemeanor; I had already shown that I would not run away; and, if he chose, he could very properly hold me in this way.

The judge seemed quite upset when he heard that I had not secured bail, and asked:

"Haven't you communicated with your father, Mr. Howard?"

"Oh," I said, jumping to my feet, as if I had forgotten all about it. "Yes, your honor. I have communicated with my father and I have got some good news. My father sailed for Europe this morning. It has been several years since he has been away, and the vacation can't help doing him good."

The judge looked very much surprised. The lawyers for the prosecution whispered together and consulted with the judge. Finally he said that he would let me go until two o'clock, so I could raise my bail in Salem.

All I had to do, I felt sure, was to leave town during one of these respites that were given me, and the whole thing would be ended. What my enemies wanted was to get me out of Salem.

Where is Alderman Doyle?

Early in the afternoon I came into court again, and told the judge I did not want to get any Salem people on my bonds. I would rather go to jail than do this.

"And, by the way," I said, "Alderman Doyle is the man who is sending me to jail, and he doesn't seem to be in court this morning. In fact, he hasn't been in court any day."

The lawyers began an elaborate explanation of Doyle's absence; and finally the judge cleared the court and called the assistant marshal — the man who had been complainant for Doyle in the matter — to take me to jail.

The assistant marshal came over to me and said: "You are foolish, Howard, not to let some of these people go your bail. There are three or four people in this room who would do it; I have heard them say so."

Then I got up and cried at the top of my voice:

"I think it is a perfect outrage, when a man is perfectly willing to go to jail, that every one should try to stop him."

The judge began to pound on the desk, and called on one of the inspectors to take me. So we started in a leisurely manner for jail.

I bought some magazines, and went into a restaurant with the inspector and had lunch; then we strolled toward the jail. As we went along, we passed the ex-Liquor-Dealer Mayor, with his resplendent silk hat, perched over one ear, and his silky side-whiskers, walking home to luncheon. He smiled with the utmost geniality, waved his hand affably, and passed on.

Curtis dropped into the front office and brought me a farewell letter from my father; and finally we arrived at the jail. I smoked a farewell cigar in the sheriff's room, and in the middle of the afternoon I found myself an inmate of cell 45.

I had been there only a short time when the cell-keeper came down and told me there was a little boy who wanted to see me. I was allowed to step into an ante-room; and there was Johnny, my newsboy. He bore with him a box of ice-cream, as an expression of his personal feeling, and he assured me that he would be outside in case I needed him. So I showed him where my cell was, and he said he would be across the street, and take a look at me occasionally. Finally the cell-keeper came in and put him out — much against his will.

My arrest was a local sensation, of course, and as soon as I reached jail I told Curtis to print the following notice in the center of a blank editorial column of the evening paper — the *Gazette*.

> Editor Howard is in jail. As soon as the authorities give him paper and pencil, he will send us an editorial.

An Editorial by Number 45

The next morning, Wednesday, I printed as my first-page leader a jocose statement of my situation, headed:

IN JAIL — A FEW PERT REMARKS BY NO. 45

> I am the guest of Mr. Essex County, board free. I am afraid I am too much of a gentleman to find fault with my host, but I do think Mr. Essex County should employ more servants.
>
> My bed is the worst made I ever saw, and all because I make it myself. If Mr. Essex County wanted a newspaper edited, I might be able to accommodate him, but when it comes to making beds, I am afraid that kind of business is not in my line.
>
> I also dislike this early bell at 5.45 A.M. It annoys me. Why do they call me early, when I am on a vacation?
>
> Speaking of beds, my mattress and pillow feel as if they were stuffed with knotted rope.
>
> It seems that the rooms here are called cells. There are no bell-boys — no electric bells to summon a servant. And I am no longer Editor Howard: I am just 45.
>
> My trunk has not arrived. Stupid express company.
>
> Think of sleeping without pajamas, for the first time in twenty years. Awful nuisance!
>
> Last night the moon had a golden ring,
> To-night no moon I see.
> And the Editor sadly lay on his cot;
> "It's beastly slow," said he.

In my editorial I explained my position.

> Many people expected that if our editor was put in jail there would come such an outburst of wrath and indignation from him as never appeared before in print.
>
> But Mr. Howard does not get excited. Mr. Howard has no desire to pose as a martyr or a hero; he just has his convictions and sticks to them.
>
> Now that we are here in cell No. 45, it is time to be calm, cool, and collected. It is not the time to rush wildly into print, and try the case in our own paper. Now is the time when one's nerves must be of steel; there must be no wavering. The truth will prevail, and the man that dares to do right will win.
>
> What's the use of getting excited over it all? Just wait and see.
>
> What's the use of getting busy, when there's not much you can do?
> What's the use of rushing wildly, when rest is best for you?
> What's the use of being a Damon, and running far away?
> Why not be a chap like Howard? If you're in the game — just stay!
> What's the use of having a paper if it isn't known at all?
> What's the use of waiting for excitement? Isn't summer as good as fall?
> What's the good of having jails, if there's none to put in there?
> What's the use of running for council — why not run for Mayor?

Curtis was in charge at the *Dispatch* office, pushing out all the newspapers he could print. There was no doubt the public was with us. In the meantime I was getting interesting information in the jail. Knowing that I was in for attacking the political gang, the other prisoners told me tales of them. Curiously enough, the man in the cell next to me was a fellow who bewailed the fact that he was in confinement for illegal liquor-selling, when the man who was really responsible was the silk-hatted Mayor of the city, who had suavely greeted me as I walked to jail.

The life in jail did not agree with me very well. It was a good enough jail, I suppose, as jails go; but it was of stone and the walls were damp, and by the second evening I was there I was suffering from an attack of rheumatism which was decidedly painful. The next evening I had to ask for a doctor. The prison authorities wanted me to go into the hospital; but I refused, and after an unpleasant night I came to the morning of my hearing.

As I left the jail for the courthouse I saw a little boy asleep on the steps. It was Johnny — the *Dispatch* newsboy. He had been there, I found, all night, waiting.

The hearing was very brief. My lawyer from Mr. Brandeis' office was now present. We waived examination, and the case was put over to the Grand Jury. Sanborn put up a piece of real estate; Ed Allen put up two hundred dollars in cash; and I returned to the *Dispatch* office to continue my newspaper work, and to hammer on my campaign for Mayor.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

THE COLLEGES AND PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

THE attention aroused by Owen Johnson's recent picture of life in one of our largest American universities is significant of the present state of public opinion.

It would be unfortunate if, in the struggle between democracy and privilege now going on in the United States, our so-called "seats of learning," especially those in the older Eastern States, should be found on the "conservative" side. Will some meditative historian, gazing centuries hence upon the ivied walls and mullioned windows of Yale or Harvard, describe these institutions, as Matthew Arnold did his own Oxford, as "homes of lost causes and impossible loyalties"?

The old simplicity of American undergraduate life has unquestionably departed. In a recent address to Yale alumni, Professor Henry P. Wright, for so many years the beloved dean of Yale, declared that the highest price the most extravagant man could pay for a room at Yale when he entered college, nearly fifty years ago, was sixty-two cents a week!

A large part of the so-called increase in undergraduate luxury is merely one sign of a more generally diffused civilization. Better college buildings are only another phase of improved sanitation. There is nothing essentially undemocratic in improved bathing facilities, in electric lights, steam heat, or even in a coherent architectural plan. The really serious tendencies of modern higher education go deeper. There is something disquieting, for example, in the public appearance of the president of one of our greatest universities, Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia, as the political ally of Boss Barnes, Tim Woodruff, and other discredited leaders of the old New York Platt machine. President Butler's violent and silly harangue as chairman of the New York State Convention—a speech cynically contemptuous of all the finer ideals of the American democracy — has done more to arouse popular distrust of those in control of American higher education than anything that has happened in years. The action of the Carnegie Foundation on the Woodrow Wilson pension is another symptom. Why did this institution, organized, it was supposed, to encourage academic independence, refuse its usual retiring allowance to one of the most distinguished of American educators? Why, after doing this, did it permit the fact to become known in sensational fashion — in other words, why did it place its influence at the disposal of those who sought to injure Mr. Wilson politically? The main fault to be found with our Eastern universities is probably that they distinctly lag behind public sentiment and popular ideals. Unless there is an awakening, the educational leadership will pass to other young and vigorous institutions, such as the University of Wisconsin, which are really making education a part of the life around them.

COLONEL BLETHEN OF SEATTLE NOT GUILTY

IN an article published in McCLURE'S MAGAZINE for October, 1911, on "The Recall in Seattle," the fact was recorded that Alden J. Blethen, editor of the Seattle *Times*, had been indicted on a charge of conspiring to protect gambling-places, houses of prostitution, and other illegal resorts. In stating this fact, the writer of the article declared that it "seemed incredible that Mr. Blethen should have personally profited from Seattle conditions," and suggested that judgment should be suspended until the pending proceedings against him be decided in a court of law.

The case against Mr. Blethen came up for trial in December, 1911, three months after the appearance of the Seattle article in McCLURE'S. The accused put in no defense. McCLURE'S MAGAZINE takes great pleasure in recording the fact that the presiding judge, after hearing all the evidence against Mr. Blethen, instructed the jury to bring in a verdict of "not guilty." "Colonel Blethen is an aggressive, active partizan," said Judge J. T. Ronald, who heard the case. "He makes friends and he makes enemies. That is the reason he is here."

Inasmuch as McCLURE'S MAGAZINE gave publicity to the fact that Mr. Blethen had been indicted on this serious charge, it is only fair that now, after the judicial proceedings have been held, we should give similar publicity to the fact that the charge against him has been judicially proved to be baseless.

"The World We Live In" is continued on page 54 of the advertising section

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

IN THIS NUMBER

Bottling Up New England

is the thrilling story of a great railroad fight. In the October McClure's, Mr. Owen Johnson, author of "Stover at Yale," begins

THE SIXTY-FIRST SECOND

SEPTEMBER—1912

That men who go camping take Ivory Soap means more than the fact that Ivory is their favorite soap.

It means that out there in the silent places, far from civilization, where each of the few necessaries brought from home must do its part, Ivory Soap can be depended upon to do the cleansing.

It tells *you* that wherever you may be, in camp or at home, you can look to Ivory Soap to answer every purpose. That you can use it for the toilet and for washing clothes and utensils equally well. That you can use it *conveniently* under any condition.

Ivory Soap *is* so satisfactory because it is mild, pure and of extraordinary quality, and because it floats.

Ivory Soap . . . . . . It Floats